

THE INVESTIGATORS in

THE MYSTERY OF THE FORTUNE OF HARROWVILLE





in

**THE MYSTERY
OF THE
FORTUNE OF HARROWVILLE**

The Three Investigators boards a traditional steam train for a trip to a railway museum in Harrowville. During the journey, they learn of strange and creepy happenings in a railway tunnel through Black Mountain. The story revolves around an accident a hundred years ago where many workers died there and a missing treasure. When the train passes the tunnel and stops because of an obstruction, Jupiter, Pete and Bob go out to investigate. Inadvertently, the train continues on, leaving the three of them stranded in the tunnel.

The Three Investigators
in
The Mystery of the Fortune of Harrowville

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Die drei ??? und der Geisterzug

(The Three ??? and the Ghost Train)

by

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1. Journey into the Past

The first thing Jupiter, Pete and Bob got to see from the old steam engine was the white cloud that appeared behind the old houses and, following the rails, pushed itself in a wide curve towards the station. Then they heard the rattling of the wheels on the rails and finally the howling whistle of the steam locomotive. The huge black iron monster came into view and thundered towards the three boys.

Brakes screeched. Again the train driver pulled the whistle and the howling sounded as if the locomotive itself had a voice. As it roared past Jupiter, he saw the hardworking coupling rods on the brightly polished driving wheels and a green metal plate on the black hull. The name of the locomotive was written there in large golden letters: 'Sequoia'.

Immediately afterwards, the coal-car with the coal and water supplies rolled past them, and then came the rest of the train—six old-fashioned compartment carriages that reminded Jupiter of those that appeared in a classic western movie. The gold lettering 'Harrowville Railway Museum Company' stretched across all six carriages.

The brakes screeched again. Snorting, hissing, stamping like an impatient warhorse, the locomotive came to a halt, and finally Jupiter could hear again what Pete was shouting enthusiastically into his ear. "Man, Juve! That's just crazy! Did you see the stoker waving at us? It's great!"

"And all just for us," Bob added and looked around the almost deserted platform. "Or almost..."

He pointed to a woman and three men who got into the front carriage. No one had got out, and when Jupiter stood on tiptoe, he saw that the carriage in front of him was completely empty.

"So much the better for us," he said. "We can choose any seat we want for the best view!"

The three boys picked up their backpacks and dragged them to the door of the carriage. Just as Bob reached out for the handle, the door was pushed open from the inside.

An about fifteen-year-old freckled boy in a splendid green and gold uniform with the words 'Harrowville Railway Museum Company' jumped out. In his hand, he held an old-fashioned signal trowel.

He looked at The Three Investigators and their backpacks, made a scowl face and asked: "Are you the junk guys from Rocky Beach?"

"Junk guys?" Pete and Bob took a deep breath.

Jupiter eyed the boy coolly. "If by that question, you mean, are we with The Jones Salvage Yard, then yes."

"I don't care what the name of the place is," the kid said. "Anyway, the train is full. Not a single seat left."

"Excuse me?" cried Bob. "Four other people got on the front carriage, all the other carriages are empty, and there is nobody else here but us! What are you talking about?"

"All reserved. Go home and go surfing or whatever it is you do on the beach." The boy turned away, but Jupiter held him by the shoulder.

“Wait a minute! That’s not how it works,” Jupe said. “We plan to go to Harrowville and visit the railway museum, and that’s what we’re going to do. Mr Kingsley, the director, sent us the tickets himself. He’s expecting us—and apparently you are, too, since you know who we are. So let us get on board now.”

Without a word the boy broke free and marched forward along the train. Jupiter, Pete and Bob watched him go.

“Junk guys?” Pete said angrily. “I’ll give him junk! He’s crazy!”

“Must be your deodorant, Pete,” Bob said. “They don’t make beach sweats here in the mountains.”

“It’s called ‘transference’,” Jupiter remarked.

“What?” Bob wondered. “No, I’m pretty sure it’s ‘beach sweat’—an unmistakable aroma.”

“I’m not talking about Pete’s deodorant. I’m talking about why the kid is mad at us.”

“So why?” Bob wondered. “Enlighten us... what did we do to that kid? I mean, besides exist?”

“We’re with The Jones Salvage Yard.”

“Uh-huh,” Pete said. “Sure. This is, of course, a serious crime. I could have thought of that myself!” He took a short break. “So what did we do to him?”

“By just being here,” said Jupiter, and when Pete’s face darkened, he hurriedly added: “We are here because the railway museum is being closed and the railway line is being shut down. We are checking out their inventory on behalf of Uncle Titus. Do you think a boy who works here as a conductor and is about to lose his job is happy to see us?”

“Thank you, Dr Jones,” Pete remarked. “Well, it’s not our fault that his stupid museum has to close.”

“We’ll see what’s going on when we get there,” Jupe added.

“We won’t get there if we don’t board now,” Bob added, “because the train is going to leave without us.”

Bob went into the carriage with his backpack. Jupiter and Pete followed him.

Inside the ancient carriage, they immediately felt transported back into the past. There were twelve individual seats, four of which faced each other. Each seat was covered with green velvet and had carved armrests. Small tables of dark wood were bolted between the seats. Luggage nets were stretched over the heads of the boys.

They chose three places and left their backpacks on the floor. Pete threw himself sweepingly onto one of the inviting seats. Ancient springs cracked and squeaked under his weight, and he laughed and made it squeak again. “They must be from the time of the gold rush, that’s how old they are!”

“It can’t be,” Jupiter said. Much more cautious than Pete, he settled down. “The railway line to Harrowville was not built until 1902, when telephones and light bulbs were invented and the demand for copper wire suddenly increased. The copper ore was mined in Nevada and transported by railway to more water-rich areas for smelting. But the railway also transported other things, for example passengers, livestock and freight. In those days you could—”

“Thank you, Jupiter,” Bob interrupted him in exactly the same tone of voice as their teacher, Mr Sanford, when he didn’t want to hear any more of Jupiter’s long-winded, precise and mostly irrefutable explanations during his lessons.

Jupiter grinned, leaned back and looked out at the platform. “So we’re not the only ones on the train after all,” he said. “The number of passengers has just increased by 14 percent.”

“I’m so glad to hear that,” Pete said. “And I’m not thinking of doing the maths. It’s the weekend now... remember that.”

“All the more reason to keep your brain as active as possible,” Jupe urged. “A healthy body is not everything. A healthy mind is part of it.”

“Right,” Pete hit back. “And if the healthy mind isn’t careful, one of the healthy bodies here will toss it right out the window.”

“There’s our new friend again.” Bob pointed to the young conductor who jumped from the train onto the platform and walked past each carriage again. At the door to the rearmost carriage, where the three of them were sitting, he swung the signal trowel. In response, the locomotive again emitted a penetrating whistle.

The boy got in and pulled the door shut behind him. With a jerk, the train started moving. He entered the carriage immediately afterwards. “Tickets, please,” he said.

Jupiter pulled the tickets out of his pocket. The boy clipped them with ancient pliers and returned them without a word. When he wanted to leave, Jupiter said: “Wait a minute. We’d like to have a word with you.”

“I don’t want to talk to you,” the boy replied rudely.

“Yes, you do,” Jupe said. “You wanna yell at us and throw us off the train, don’t you?”

“That’s right,” said the boy snottily. “Because we have enough looters and thieves in Harrowville. We don’t need any more from the coast.”

“That’s it!” Pete burst out. “You’re out of your mind! That’s another one of your—.”

“Pete!” cried Jupiter. “Take a break! Listen...”

Jupiter turned back to the boy, who stared at him sincerely. “Mr Kingsley has asked my Uncle Titus to buy some old things from him. They’ve known each other for thirty years, and plundering Mr Kingsley is the last thing we want... By the way, what’s your name?”

The boy hesitated, then reluctantly said: “Fred Jenkins.”

“Fine. I am Jupiter Jones. This is Pete Crenshaw and Bob Andrews. And this...” He reached into his pocket, “is our card.”

Fred took the card and gave it a disparaging glance. The card said:



Right after that, his eyes got really big. “Investigators?” he asked, stunned. “I thought you were working in a junkyard!”

“Salvage yard,” Jupiter corrected him. “We only represent my uncle, who owns the salvage yard. But as investigators, we have already solved a number of unusual events.”

“Seriously? You’re not kidding me?”

“Not at all. We work closely with the Rocky Beach Police Department.”

“Cool!” Fred’s hostility was suddenly wiped out. “What do the question marks mean?”

Pete and Bob grinned. They didn't even try to answer the question and steal Jupiter's thunder. The First Investigator puffed himself up and said: "The question marks are our company logo. As you know, the question mark is the symbol for everything unknown. We investigate strange phenomena and mysterious events, and our greatest advantage is that we approach our cases without prejudice. We simply believe anything is possible. In this way, we have been able to provide the police with valuable information."

"Sounds great," Fred said and put the card in his pocket. Then he hesitated, as if he wanted to say something else.

"What is it?" asked Bob.

"Well..." Fred hesitated again. "It may sound silly, but what do you do if, say, something's haunted?"

Jupiter looked at him sharply. "We are interested in that too. What is haunted?"

"Here on the track," Fred said. "In the tunnel through Black Mountain."

Bob laughed. "I'm sure this is just a publicity stunt."

"Not at all!" cried Fred, insulted. "You hear noises and a dreadful moaning, and at night, steam comes out of the tunnel opening! A terrible accident happened in there once. And now the dead go around haunting!"

Pete swallowed. "You're not serious."

"Oh, yes," Fred said. "You do not need to believe me, but it is true. It's pretty scary going through the tunnel but Carl says it's all rubbish. Anyway, we can't keep taking the longer way via Owens Peak."

"Interesting," mumbled Jupiter. "Who is Carl?"

"Carl Sheehan, the train driver. And the stoker's name is Sam Reilly, and he's my uncle. Now, I've got some tickets to check. I'll be back later with drinks—Coke, juice, soda, whatever you want." Then he put on a weird grin. "There's ice cream too—if I can get to the fridge without being seen."

"Why?" Bob asked.

"Because I wasn't supposed to be here today, but I sneaked in. After all, it's my job! Carl only found me here just before Owens Peak. Boy, was he annoyed! He has forbidden me to even go to the fridge today, so I might not even get hold of the ice cream until further notice." He grinned. "But he's in the front of the train, and the fridge and I are here... and you are paying passengers. See you later!" He turned around and left.

The three boys looked at each other. "Go ahead, Jupe," Bob said. "Say it."

"It was on the tip of my tongue," said Jupiter. He sat up straight and announced: "The Three Investigators have a new case!"

2. The Destroyed Dream

The brochure obtained from a booth at the station gave a description of the journey:

The trip to Harrowville's Railway Museum offers railway romance at its best.

From the original railway station in Sterling that was built in 1900, you travel through the lovely Kern River valley, past Lake Isabella and into the majestic backdrop of the Sierra Nevada. It is an incredible journey through narrow valleys, over high passes and breathtaking gorges.

This Sterling–Harrowville–Owens Peak railway line was laid in inhospitable wilderness between 1902 and 1904 by the brave pioneers of the Harrowville Railway Corporation. These fearless men worked and lived under the most difficult conditions in constant struggle against raging snowstorms, savage native tribes and revolting Chinese workers. Those intrepid heroes...

This was as far as The Three Investigators had read the brochure.

"Advertising is certainly necessary," Jupiter said, "but I don't fancy the excessive use of adjectives in the description."

Pete and Bob agreed with Jupe, as he put the brochure away. Then they sat back trying to experience 'railway romance at its best'. Soon, 'the lovely Kern River valley' passed the windows unnoticed, and the 'majestic backdrop of the Sierra Nevada' wasted its splendour.

Jupiter pulled a folded sheet of paper from his pocket and read it aloud to drown out the rattling of the iron wheels:

Dear Titus,

The time has come. I give up. The old story has started again, worse than ever, and now they're even dragging Sarah and Sue into it. I'm done, and you know what it costs me to admit it. But my family is more important to me than a few discarded locomotives and all the shabby junk I've thought of for so long as my greatest treasure.

The museum is closed, and next Tuesday, everything will be sold here. Would you like to come here on the weekend and get some stuff for your salvage yard? I can't think of anyone I'd rather give my collection to than you. The salvage yard is your dream—I hope it is a lot better than mine.

Bring your nephew too—for a boy his age, a look behind the scenes of a museum is always interesting, and maybe he can use a few things for his detective agency.

Please call me. Of course, you can spend the night with us. Sarah and Sue will be happy to see you again and meet Jupiter.

*In old friendship,
William Kingsley
Harrowville*

"When Uncle Titus received this letter, he immediately called Mr Kingsley," Jupiter said. "They know each other from school. William Kingsley was a weirdo—only interested in

railways. After school, he worked for years as a mechanic, shunter and engine driver, until he finally made his dream come true and built the museum in Harrowville.

“But then everything went wrong. One misfortune followed the other. The museum had to stay closed for weeks and the visitors stayed away. Uncle Titus said something about fires, burglaries and accidents, which Mr Kingsley told him about. He didn’t mention a spook.”

“But maybe the spook is that old story!” said Pete.

Jupiter shook his head. “I don’t believe it. In his letter, there is no hint of the spook. Mr Kingsley wrote: ‘... they’re even dragging Sarah and Sue into it’. Sarah is his wife and Sue is his daughter. He wouldn’t have put it that way if it wasn’t about living people. The museum has been sabotaged.”

“But for what?” Pete asked. “What’s there to sabotage in an old museum in a run-down town?”

“Maybe Mr Kingsley wanted you to clear things up,” Bob said. “And by a happy coincidence, all three of us are here.”

“I wouldn’t call it a happy coincidence that my uncle injured his foot,” Jupiter said sternly. “And he merely instructed us to examine the museum’s holdings and offer Mr Kingsley a good price so he wouldn’t make a loss.”

When Titus Jones had learned that the Railway Museum was going to close and was selling the entire stock, he immediately cleared a large space by the fence where he wanted to store the things. But then he had stumbled over an overturned iron gate lying in the yard and had to change all plans. Pete and Bob had immediately agreed enthusiastically when Uncle Titus asked them to accompany Jupiter in his place.

“Look around... See what we could use,” Uncle Titus had said. “And don’t fall on the old treasures like vultures. My friend William has to bury his life’s dream. I’m counting on you to help him instead of robbing him.”

“So, now it seems that we have a case to solve as a bonus,” Bob said in high spirits.

Pete looked less happy. Despite the many strange cases they had solved so far, he still avoided everything that smelled of the supernatural.

For the next half hour, they looked around the train. They went through the carriages and looked at every corner of it. The fourth carriage contained a small restaurant, a kitchen, and the toilet. The restaurant was furnished in the old western style and the bar was panelled with dark wood... but it was closed. All the lights were off and no one was in sight. Apparently it was not worthwhile to offer food or drinks with so few passengers.

“Look at that!” Pete pointed to a small hole in one of the support beams on the swing door to the kitchen. “It looks like a bullet hole.”

“And here!” cried Bob. “Gold-plated fittings! Does your uncle really want to buy the train, Juve?”

Jupiter laughed. “At least he nearly drove Aunt Mathilda to a heart attack when he said we had the perfect place by the fence for an old discarded steam locomotive. But we’ll probably have to make do with old signs, time-tables and squeaky benches.”

Moving on to the third and second carriages, the boys did not see anybody there. They stopped at the door to the front carriage. There was a sign that said: ‘Business meeting. Please do not disturb.’

Jupiter peered through the glass window. The four passengers were sitting opposite each other. On the table in the middle was an opened briefcase. It stood like a wall between them, and the man and woman behind it had leaned back into the cushions as if they felt threatened. They were both about forty years old, but already had grey hair and looked as if they had been defeated all their lives.

Of the man who had the open side of the briefcase in front of him, Jupiter could only make out a brown suit and a broad shoulder. His voice penetrated through the window as an indistinct murmur, and he struck his knee several times with his clenched fist as he spoke. Jupiter could not see the third man who was at the window seat next to the man in the brown suit.

Jupiter turned to Pete and Bob. "Let's go back."

Bob was just opening the door to the third carriage when the door behind them was ripped open. They turned around. The man in the brown suit stood there and snapped at them: "Who are you? Why are you snooping around?"

Jupiter found his voice first. "We are passengers like you," he replied politely. "We want to visit the museum in Harrowville... and now we are looking for Fred Jenkins, the conductor because we'd like to have a drink. Have you seen him?"

"No, I didn't," the man yapped at him. "Now get out of here!" He threw the door into the lock and pulled the curtain so hard on the window that it almost tore.

"Lovely fellow," commented Pete. "So helpful and philanthropic! But what about our Coke now?"

Jupiter frowned. "And where is Fred? He went forward and never came back."

"And he said specifically that he wanted to take care of the other passengers," Bob added. "There's nobody else on the train except these four fine people and us!"

"And the mysterious last passenger," Jupiter added. "Just before departure, another man boarded the train. I only saw him for a moment. He was medium height and quite thin, with black straight hair, wearing sunglasses, a dark suit and black shoes."

"And he has a birthmark on his right shoulder that looked exactly like a map of Ohio," Pete mocked. "Just a quick glance, I'm not laughing! You probably even recognized which tailor he bought his suit from."

"No," Jupiter calmly replied. "The suit looked rather shabby... and he had no luggage."

"Well, if he is not here now, he is probably in the toilet," Bob said. "Now can we go back and look for Fred? I don't feel like being yelled at again."

They made their way back. In the third carriage, Pete suddenly grabbed Jupiter's arm. "Do you hear that? The banging?"

"It came from the dining carriage," Jupiter said. "Come on!"

They ran off and stormed into the restaurant. But here everything was as empty and quiet as before. But immediately afterwards, they heard the banging again—this time behind them. Pete turned around and laughed. "Bob, you were right about the toilet! There's someone in it!"

"Yes," said Jupiter, "but he seems to want out pretty badly."

Bob knocked on the toilet door. "Hello? Is there a problem?"

A roar of rage answered him. "You rascals! I'll wring your necks! Let me out of here!"

Stunned, the three boys looked at each other. The voice clearly belonged to the young conductor Fred Jenkins.

"Huh?" Pete said. "Why is he mad at us?"

"Fellas!" Jupiter suddenly said. "Look at the door lock! It's ancient, and you can lock it from the outside. But the key is missing, and Fred obviously doesn't have it. Someone locked him in the toilet!"

"Open the door!" yelled Fred from inside. The next thing they knew, there was another bang, and the door shook as the boy threw himself against it. But the wood was strong and didn't splinter. "I'll get you!"

“Fred!” cried Jupiter loudly. “Stop raving! We didn’t lock you in, but we’ll try to free you. The key isn’t here. Is there a spare key?”

“I’m not falling for that,” yelled Fred. “If I tell you, you’ll steal that too!”

“Nonsense,” Jupiter said. “Pete, your lock picks.”

“Wait!” yelled Fred through the door. “The key’s in the kitchen! On a nail in the beam on the right behind the swinging door.”

Bob was already on his way and pushed open the swinging door.

“Oh, man!” he shouted. “What a mess this is! There’s a huge puddle of melted ice cream on the floor...”

“Get the key first,” Jupiter ordered. “We’ll worry about the ice cream later.”

Bob came back and swung a big, old-fashioned black key, and a few moments later Fred stumbled out of his prison. His beautiful green and gold uniform was wrinkled and had a big wet spot on his chest. A reddish-blue bruise formed on the side of his neck. His face was pale and his freckles looked like tiny drops of blood.

“That was incredibly funny,” he hissed angrily. “Why can’t you admit that you wanted to play a stupid trick on me for telling you about the haunting?”

“Give us a break!” cried Pete. “We didn’t lock you in there!”

“Who else? Let me tell you something—”

“Fred!” cried Jupiter. “Take it easy. First, we just helped you, and you could at least say thank you. Second, it really wasn’t us, but I have an idea who could have done it.”

Fred still looked angry, but Jupiter’s firm voice did its job this time too. “Fine,” he said reluctantly. “And who?”

“I’ll tell you later,” Jupe said. “More important is that we clean up the mess in the kitchen before it goes all the way through the train.”

Fred let out a scream and rushed past The Three Investigators into the kitchen. “My ice cream!”

Jupiter, Pete and Bob looked over to him and immediately heard the next scream and a flood of curses. “My hat!”

“Dear me,” Pete said. “So young and already so irritable.”

“You’d be irritable if you’d just been locked in a toilet,” Bob said.

“Come,” Jupiter said. “Let’s make ourselves useful for once.”

The Three Investigators helped Fred mop up the mess and clean the kitchen. The help reconciled him and he was ready to tell them what had happened.

“I had just taken the ice cream out of the fridge to bring it to you,” he said. “Then I heard a strange noise behind me. I wanted to turn around, but I never got to it. The next thing I know, I was sitting on the toilet and my neck hurt.”

“And why did you think we did it?” Bob asked.

“Because there’s no one but you at the back of the train! And Mr Campbell wouldn’t even let me in because he was having a business meeting. He certainly didn’t come after me.”

“Mr Campbell?” asked Pete. “Is that the sort of out-of-control hunchback in a brown suit?”

“Yeah...” Fred snorted. “Mr Campbell is the Copper Baron—or so he’s called. He’s buying up all the land around the station. Most of the people there work for him, and now he’s taking over the museum. He would throw someone like me out without batting an eyelid... but he wouldn’t knock me down—he’d have his people to do that. As far as I know, he won’t get his own hands dirty.” He wrung a rag of melted ice cream over the bucket, like he was trying to strangle somebody.

Bob washed Fred’s hat at the sink. “But he doesn’t own the railway, does he?”

“Not yet,” Fred said. “The railway and museum are owned by the Harrowville Railway Museum Company—that’s Mr Kingsley, who put the whole museum together and donated it to the town. And he has vowed to sell every single piece to junk dealers rather than leave Mr Campbell even a hammer because they hate each other like the plague.”

The Three Investigators exchanged a look. Jupiter nodded and turned to Fred again. “Let’s come back to your involuntary visit to the toilet. Are you quite sure you didn’t see any other passengers on the train apart from us and Mr Campbell’s three companions?”

“I’m not stupid,” said Fred.

“I suppose that means no,” Jupiter said. “This allows only one conclusion—he hid as soon as he entered the train. Then he waited until you passed him and he knocked you down.”

“Who?” cried Fred angrily. “Aren’t you listening to me? There was nobody else here!”

Jupiter remained calm. “You saw no one. But that doesn’t mean that no one was here. In fact, I saw someone get into the train just before we left—a slim man with black hair and a black suit.”

Fred stared at him. For a while he didn’t say anything, just kneaded on the mop. Then he suddenly asked: “Was that guy Chinese?”

“I don’t know,” Jupiter said in surprise. “He wore sunglasses, and I only saw him for a moment. But—yes, he could have been Chinese—with the black hair and the rather slender figure... Why?”

Fred didn’t answer. He dipped the mop back into the water and wrung it out.

“Fred,” Jupiter said, “if we are to help you, you will have to give us some clues. Do you suspect a certain person? Why?”

Fred still didn’t say anything, but finally he sighed. “Okay, I’ll tell you about it.”

At that moment, the locomotive emitted a piercing whistle and it suddenly became dark. The rattling of the train was suddenly much louder.

“We’re already in the tunnel!” cried Fred in horror. “And I forgot the lights—today of all days, with Mr Campbell on the train and Carl already mad at me!”

“Isn’t there any emergency lighting here?” Pete asked.

“On a train from 1902? Nah, that wasn’t around then! I would have lighted up all the lamps if I hadn’t been locked up! I’ll be right back.”

They heard something clinking and cracking. Then suddenly there was a whipping bang outside, and the next moment, some white rags whirled past the windows. Immediately afterwards, the brakes of the train screeched. The Three Investigators lost their balance and were hurled forward. Fred cried out. With one last piercing screech, the train stopped in the darkness.

3. The Copper Baron

For a short time, they heard nothing but the hissing and puffing of the *Sequoia*. Then a somewhat shaky voice came from the darkness.

“Pete? Jupe?”

“Here, Bob. I’m okay.”

“Also here. And I’m sure I’ll be okay when Pete removes his elbow from my stomach.”

“What, is that you? Sorry, Jupe.”

Something rushed, Jupiter groaned, and something rolled across the floor. “Are you all right, Bob?”

“I think so. What happened, anyway? Did we have an accident? Did we collide with anything?”

“That was no collision,” Jupiter said. “Otherwise we wouldn’t have got off so lightly. The train just braked.”

“I heard a bang,” Bob said. “Like from an explosion. And—”

“—There were some bright things outside the window,” Pete added.

“I think we hit the brakes then. But since you were approaching me in a ballistic trajectory following the laws of gravity, and I was distracted accordingly. Therefore, I have no reliable information at this time.”

“Jupe is fine,” Bob commented dryly. “Can someone turn on the lights?”

The next moment, all three of them shouted out in horror: “Fred!”

They groped their way through the darkness.

Then Pete cried out: “There is blood everywhere!—No, wait a minute. It smells like vanilla... water! It is water. The bucket must have fallen over.”

“Thank you, Pete!” Bob said. “A heart attack is just what I need right now!”

“I’m sorry. But I have—here! I found Fred. I think he hit his head. Man, this is really not his day. Fred? Can you hear me? It’s me, Pete!”

“All right.” They heard Fred mumbling dazed. “I won’t let anyone else in, Mr Kingsley, on my honour.”

“Fred!” cried Pete again.

“Just don’t shake him,” Jupiter warned. “He may have a concussion. We must find a lamp!”

“Someone’s coming!” cried Bob.

A shimmering light appeared behind the door to the third carriage, and a man pushed the door open. He was wearing a shabby overalls of dark cloth. His face and hands were covered with soot. In his hand, he held a burning oil lamp. “Are you all right, boys?”

The First Investigator straightened up. “I’m glad you came, sir. I assume that you are the stoker. We’re fine, but Fred probably hit his head and needs medical attention.”

“I am Sam Reilly, the stoker,” the man confirmed. “Let me see what’s wrong with Fred. Is that blood?”

“No, just water,” Pete said quickly. “We were just about to—”

“Not now.” The stoker shooed Pete out of the cramped kitchen and knelt down next to Fred. “Fred? How are you, boy?”

"The lamps," mumbled Fred. "I must light the lamps when we come into the tunnel. Let me out!"

"It's okay, Fred. I'll take care of the lamps." The man looked up. "The lamps and matches are in the cupboard over there, boys. We could sure use a little more light over here."

Glad to be able to do something, The Three Investigators took two lamps from the cupboard and lit them. They were the same old-fashioned oil lamps as the ones Sam had with him.

"Is there no electric light in the whole train?" Jupiter asked.

Sam laughed briefly. "Boy, this is a museum train. You can't desecrate it with electricity."

"And the fridge?"

"Sitting on a crate of ice." Sam effortlessly picked Fred up, carried him out of the kitchen and put him on one of the benches by the dining tables. "Now please go and bring a lamp forward so that those fine people will no longer sit in the dark."

"Yes, sir," said Jupiter. "What happened, anyway?"

"My colleague is looking at this right now. We ran through another one of those banners, and then something flew off." Sam got a glass of water for Fred, who drank it slowly and apparently wasn't quite conscious yet.

"A banner?" Pete repeated in bewilderment. "In the middle of the tunnel? How could you have seen it?"

"Oh, yes," Sam said grimly. "We've got beautiful, powerful headlights that shows us the banner before we run through it."

"So this is not the first time that the journey is interrupted?" Jupiter asked.

"No, this happens almost every time. But we don't usually stop for that."

"So it has nothing to do with the haunting?" Pete asked.

"Haunting?" Sam snorted. "You mean a spook? There's no such thing as a spook."

"But Fred said—" Pete began.

"Yes, I know. Fred has a vivid imagination. Listen, I'm sorry for getting you guys to help, even though you are passengers, but can you bring the lamp forward now? Anyway, Mr Campbell should be furious by now."

The Three Investigators nodded and went on their way.

Earlier, in bright daylight, exploring the carriages had been great fun. But now everything was dark, and in the light of the two oil lamps, eerie shadows jumped across the floor.

Jupiter held a lamp up to one of the windows and was surprised to see that the tunnel was much wider and higher than he had expected. The rock wall, scratched and fissured by the blasting, disappeared into darkness on both sides.

Jupiter looked down. "Look! There's a path by the tracks!"

"I'm not interested in anything," Pete said. "Haunted or not, I'd like it if we could just get on with the trip."

"Me too," Bob said. "All this time I have this uneasy feeling... like we're being watched."

"I agree with you on that, fellas," Jupiter said and quickly crossed the carriage.

Pete and Bob hastily followed him. When they had closed the door behind them, Pete whispered: "Do you think our mysterious passenger is around?"

"I don't know—but he must be somewhere," Jupiter whispered back. He turned to the carriage they had just left, but saw nothing. "Unless he left the train—but why would he do that? We are stopped here in the middle of the mountain, and there is not a single settlement far and wide. He must have found a pretty good place to hide."

But they had no time to search for the mystery passenger. The third and the second carriage were as dark as those at the back. In the first carriage, there was a dull blue light—perhaps from a laptop. It shone through the curtain at the door. Inside, someone was talking. His voice was not loud, but so full of hatred that the three boys stopped abruptly.

“Well done, Mr Campbell. Really great. Isn’t it enough that you’ve ruined us? What’s with the extra show? Or I swear I’m gonna blow the whistle on you and all your schemes!”

“Shut up, Collins!” said a cold voice, which The Three Investigators recognized immediately. It belonged to the man in the brown suit—Mr Campbell, the Copper Baron, as Fred had called him.

“This is not my show. I have no interest in you after this business is done. You heard what Sheehan said—it was another one of those banners. I don’t have to put up with that kind of nonsense.”

“And in the very tunnel that has been haunted for months!” scoffed the man named Collins. “How stupid do you think I am? I know you’re behind this whole circus!”

“You can say that again. Something banged, and all of a sudden the lights went out.” The woman, who hadn’t said anything before, cried out in horror.

And right after that, another man’s voice said: “There’s a light there, Frank.”

Jupiter, Pete and Bob flinched. The next moment the door was ripped open, and Campbell was standing there, snapping at them: “What are you sneaking around for?”

Jupiter held up the lamp. “The stoker sent us so you could have some light here,” he replied politely. “I hope none of you is hurt?”

Mr Campbell didn’t answer. He snatched the lamp from Jupiter’s hand and slammed the door in his face.

They listened for a moment, but there was no sound from the first carriage. So they turned around and headed back.

After a few steps, Jupiter said: “I would like to know if Mr Campbell is really behind this spook. If he is, it will probably be hard to prove anything to him.”

“I wouldn’t put it past him,” Bob said. “Did you hear what this Collins said? That Campbell ruined him? And Fred said that Campbell wanted to buy the museum. We’ve had this kind of thing before, that someone is staging a spook to get rid of a rival.”

Jupiter nodded. “Hand me the lamp, Bob. We should take a look outside.”

“What?” cried Pete. “Why is that?”

“I’m interested in the banner.”

“We can’t do anything with that after the train has gone through it,” Bob said. “It should be in a thousand pieces.”

“I know—but maybe we can still find a lead.”

Pete didn’t budge. “And what about the spook? This is the tunnel that Fred was talking about, isn’t it?”

“I’m just hoping we’ll run into the spook.” Determined, Jupiter crossed the carriage.

Then he stopped so suddenly that Bob bumped into him. “Hey!”

“Look.” Jupiter pointed to the door to the outside. “It is open. Someone got out!”

“Maybe it is Sam,” Bob said. “Maybe he had the same idea we did, and is looking around outside.”

“Or our mysterious last passenger.” Jupiter stood there for a moment, pinching his lower lip, engaging in serious thought. Then he went to the door and opened it wider.

“Jupe, wait!” cried Pete. “Maybe that guy out there is waiting for us! We should think again!”

“Oh no!” said Jupiter. “He doesn’t expect us to come out. This gives us a definite advantage... or maybe it could be Sam.”

“Jupe!” cried Pete. “You don’t want to go out there!”

“Of course not,” Jupiter said... and in the next moment, he stepped out.

4. In the Tunnel

“There’s nothing here,” Pete explained a second after his feet touched the tunnel ground. He turned around and reached for the door handle. Bob pulled him along.

“Don’t be such a baby, Pete! It’s just a very dark tunnel in which an unlit train has stopped while the locomotive is panting and ranting like an asthma-sick hippo. What’s so dangerous about that?”

“What about Fred’s hint that this place is haunted... and Mr Collins’s hint that the place is haunted... and my personal feeling that this tunnel is haunted by every ghost in North America... Hey! Come back here!”

Without waiting for Pete to finish his ranting, Jupiter had made his way to the locomotive. Bob followed him. And as Jupiter was carrying the lamp, Pete suddenly found himself alone in the dark. His own voice echoed from the high, arched rock faces. He turned around and stared into the impenetrable darkness of the tunnel. Though he couldn’t see anything, he had the feeling that there was something—something creeping up on him silently. The hairs on the back of his neck stood on end. Without thinking, he turned and ran after the other two.

Further ahead, the air smelled pervasively of oil and burnt coal. Hissing steam escaped from the chimney of the *Sequoia*.

In the light of Jupiter’s lamp, the mighty black iron hull shone like the skin of a primeval monster that could roar to life any time. Earlier, on arrival at the station, it had not appeared as massive to The Three Investigators as it does now. The two driving wheels on the right side were as tall as Pete. Involuntarily, even Jupiter held his breath as if he was afraid of waking the monster. They stepped around the cow catcher—the massive steel grating mounted at the front of a locomotive to deflect obstacles on the track that might otherwise derail the train.

And then their hearts stopped. Next to the locomotive, barely visible outside the headlight beam, a man bent over a shapeless bundle lying motionless on the ground. The light of a flashlight twitched over what looked like a uniform jacket... and what protruded from the bundle was unmistakably a human hand!

Speechless, The Three Investigators stood there and could not take their eyes off the thing on the ground.

The man looked up and narrowed his eyes against the light. “Sam,” he said hoarsely. “Is that you? Who is that with you?”

With a trembling hand, Jupiter lifted the lamp higher. Now he could see the man better. He was probably between thirty and forty years old, had short light hair and, like Sam the stoker, wore soot-smearred overalls.

“I... I’m not Sam.” Jupiter stammered. “I’m J-Jupiter Jones. Th... that man there... did we run him over? Is... is he dead?”

“What?” The train driver was staring at Jupe like he didn’t understand him. Then he slowly got up. “No. For goodness’ sake! It’s not human. It is—a doll... from the museum.”

Jupiter had the gift of thinking lightning fast even in unusual situations. While Pete and Bob were still trying to understand what this meant, it was immediately clear to him. “A

mannequin? Someone put it on the tracks?”

“I only saw it when the banner broke.” The train driver took a few steps away from the torn remains. “If it had been a human being—” He broke off and for a moment seemed to struggle for composure. Only then did he seem to realize who he was talking to. “Hey, what are you doing out here anyway? Get back in the train! We’re leaving right now!”

“Shouldn’t we help you retrieve the... the doll?”

“For what?” said the train driver sharply.

“For the police,” replied Jupiter in surprise. “After all, it’s a valuable clue that may help to catch the culprit.”

“I’m not touching that thing,” the man said. “And neither should you. The police will take care of it. Get in the train. Go!”

But Jupiter continued to drill stubbornly. “What was that banner that Mr Reilly told us about? Was it stretched across the track? Did it say anything?”

“Just the usual. Now get going. I don’t want to stand here any longer than necessary.” That sounded pretty rough.

Dissatisfied, The Three Investigators made their way back. But instead of getting into the second carriage—at a safe distance from the unpleasant Mr Campbell—Jupiter marched purposefully past all six carriages and into the darkness of the tunnel.

“Jupe!” hissed Pete. “What is this? Let’s get in the train.”

“We are looking for the banner!” Jupiter replied. His voice echoed eerily through the tunnel. “... At least the shreds. We’ll never get another opportunity like this!”

“Jupe!” Pete almost yelled. “What if there are more nasty things lying around here?”

“Then we’ll examine them,” Jupiter insisted. “Surely you’re not afraid of some old mannequins? You’ve seen them before.”

“Yes, in a museum where they belong! Not in some abysmal black tunnel!”

“That’s why we want to find out what else is going on here. Let’s go, fellas.”

“Great,” Pete murmured. “I hate it when our First Investigator loses his mind.”

Bob was not particularly comfortable either, but he knew that the only way to dissuade Jupiter from his decision was to tie him up, gag him and drag him back. So they followed him away from the train and kept close to their only lamp.

After about ten metres, Jupiter suddenly bent down. “Here! Look!”

Bob and Pete huddled around him and watched what he held out in his hand.

“Canvas,” Pete noted. “Or fabric. That was to be expected, right?”

“Maybe we’ll find another piece with something written on it.” Eagerly Jupiter searched further, and now Bob and Pete joined in—mainly to get back to the train as quickly as possible.

After a few minutes, they did find a few more scraps of fabric. On two of the shreds, they discovered remains of a dark paint that smelled of varnish.

“Oil paint,” commented Jupiter. “Quickly! Maybe we’ll find more here!”

With new zeal, they searched on.

“Jupe!” cried Pete. “Shine your light here on the wall.”

Jupiter and Bob ran to him. From the light of the lamp, they saw a metal hook from which a rope was hanging. The end was torn off, but on the floor they found a larger piece of fabric. There was an almost complete character painted on it.

“So now we know why Fred asked if our mysterious last passenger was Chinese,” Jupiter said. “This is a Chinese character on the banner!”

“In the middle of the Sierra Nevada?” Pete asked, stunned.

“At least the train driver wasn’t surprised,” Bob noted.

Jupiter already turned around and stepped over the rails to get to the opposite side of the tunnel.

Suddenly they heard a sound that froze the blood in all of them, including Jupiter—a penetrating hiss, followed by the pounding of cylinders. They turned around and started running, but it was too late. The monster had come to life!

In the pale light of the locomotive headlights, they saw the train moving.

“Pete!” cried Jupiter shrieking. “Run after the train!”

Pete ran. He ran as fast as never before in his life, while Jupiter and Bob screamed their lungs out behind him. The train accelerated, but Pete went closer. The platform behind the sixth carriage was within reach. Pete already stretched out his arm and grabbed the grating.

Then the train suddenly became faster. With a scream, Pete let go, stumbled, lost his balance and fell down lengthwise. When Jupiter and Bob reached him, the train was already out of sight. The rattling became quieter and quieter and finally died away in the darkness.

5. Haunting in the Tunnel

“Pete!” cried Bob. “Are you all right?”

“Gradually this is becoming a standard question,” joked Pete, but he didn’t really feel like joking. “I think I scraped my knee. Shine the light here, Jupe.”

Jupiter held the lamp lower. “Yes, your knee is bleeding. Can you stand up?”

“One of my easiest exercises.” Pete gritted his teeth and lifted himself up. “Ow!”

“Too bad!” cried Bob. “Did you slip? You had already caught the train!”

“But the train is stronger than me.”

Perplexed and dismayed, they looked at each other.

Finally, Bob said: “Well, Jupe. Didn’t you say earlier that we had a definite advantage out here? Of course, once again, you’re absolutely right. We’ve been left in the middle of nowhere, and that’s the best thing that has happened to us.”

“I don’t think that was the intention,” Jupiter said. “I think the train driver thought we were already in the train. They’ll soon realize we’re not there, and then they’ll come back.”

“Great,” Pete said. “This could take hours. Shall we just sit here and stare at the walls?”

“No.” Jupiter lifted the lamp. The flickering glow of the burning oil cast the shadows of The Three Investigators as grotesque images on the high, arched tunnel walls. At a distance, the light hit a dark, shapeless bundle. “Let’s have a look.”

“Oh, goodness,” Pete moaned. “Here we go...”

The closer they came, the more terrible the broken doll looked. Arms, legs and torso were shattered. The clothes once seemed to have been an old-fashioned suit was now just shreds of dark rags. The uniform jacket was gone. The face was that of a man with a moustache. Under angrily contracted brows, the glass eyes stared gloomily up into the arch of the tunnel. The doll was not a simple mannequin, but the wax model of a certain person. It looked frighteningly real.

“I’d like to know who dreamed up such a thing,” Jupiter said. “It’s quite macabre to put something like that on the rails. As a joke, I think it’s a complete failure.”

“It probably wasn’t meant to be a joke.” Pete avoided looking at the shattered doll and preferred to look into the darkness of the tunnel. “You saw the train driver. He was scared to death.”

“No wonder.” Jupiter bent down and pulled a piece of cloth from the collar of the doll. “Look—here is a name tag.”

“Reginald Harrow, H.R.C.,” Bob read it out because Pete refused to look. “Well, well, well... A real character! That’s not nice, though, throwing him under the train. What’s H.R.C.?”

“Probably ‘Harrowville Railway Corporation’,” Jupiter said. “I suggest we ask the train driver what he has done with the uniform jacket. As far as I could tell, it belonged to the museum as well. Fred wore a very similar one.”

“Can we get out of here?” Pete asked. “My knee hurts, and I think this tunnel is just creepy.”

“Harrowville doesn’t seem like a pleasant place to live in,” Jupiter said.

He and Bob had taken the limping Pete between them and were now slowly walking along the tunnel path. The oil lamp cast its flickering light on the rugged rock face.

“Mr Campbell, the Copper Baron, is driving his fellow residents to financial ruin,” Jupe continued. “And they take revenge by sneaking into almost empty trains, knocking down and locking up young conductors, hanging up banners with Chinese characters in the middle of tunnels, using wax models to stop museum trains, and leaving harmless investigators in tunnels. This kind of resistance does not seem to me to be particularly effective.”

“Probably not against Campbell,” Bob said. “Against us, I found it very effective. If only we’d taken our mobile phone with us!”

“We wouldn’t have any reception out here in the mountains anyway,” Jupe said.

They remained silent for ten steps until the surrounding silence became eerie.

“Maybe that’s what Mr Kingsley implied in the letter,” Bob said. “Remember? ‘The old story has started again, worse than ever’—or something like that. Collins also accused Campbell of being ‘behind this whole circus’.”

“Oh no,” said Jupiter. “A banner, a run-over wax model—that’s not the haunting! Fred said something about strange noises, dreadful moaning, and steam coming out of the tunnel opening.”

Again there was silence for ten steps.

“Thank you, Jupe,” Pete said angrily. “I had just begun to calm down.”

Jupiter was about to answer when Bob suddenly stopped.

“Speaking of strange noises,” he said softly in a husky voice. “Be quiet. Jupe, turn off the lamp!”

“Are you insane?” hissed Pete.

“Geez, Pete! Jupe, the flap on the lamp! Quick!” Bob insisted.

Jupiter folded the metal plate of the lamp in front of the glass and the darkness closed around it. They stood motionless and listened. The silence was not as perfect as they had thought. Somewhere far away, they heard something like soft, steady beats.

“It’s only dripping water,” Jupiter said. “Bob, what—”

“Quiet!” hissed Bob. “I just heard something else—somewhere behind us. It was like someone had kicked a rock aside. I don’t think we’re alone!”

“Oh, goodness,” Pete said hoarsely. “There’s nobody behind us! Just—the doll!”

“Pete!” said Jupe. “Stop it. This is reality, not some silly horror movie!”

“That’s what’s so terrible!” Pete remarked.

“Would you both please shut up?” Bob whispered, annoyed.

They listened, but it remained silent.

“Let’s go on,” Jupiter finally said in a subdued voice.

Pete grabbed him by the arm. “But not in the dark! Turn on the lamp again.”

“Pete! We just walk along the wall and stay close together. If someone is really following us, they won’t be able to see us! And if it’s the doll, it will be supernatural anyway, so it can probably see in the dark.”

“And the doll will go after the thief of his uniform jacket,” Bob said in a hollow voice. “And I can’t think why a Mr Harrow from Harrowville should wear a simple track jacket. It didn’t go with the rest of the outfit at all. That’s probably why he looked so angry. That will be an eternal curse—”

“Bob,” Pete said.

“Yes?”

“Shut up.”

Bob giggled, but he actually kept his mouth shut.

Silently, they groped their way forward. Again and again they stopped and listened, but around them was only the heavy silence of gigantic boulders.

Suddenly Jupiter stopped without warning and Bob bumped into him. "Hey! Move on, Juve!"

"Here's something funny," Jupiter said. "The rock face bends at a right angle, and I can't feel where it stops. I have to see this." He opened the lamp and the three boys stared in amazement at a wall that reached to the ceiling of the tunnel and blocked the way. Juve lowered the lamp to the tracks and saw that the track went straight into the wall!

"I don't believe it!" Bob pointed out. "We're at a dead end!"

"But did the train go this way?" Pete asked in surprise. "It can't have vanished into thin air!"

"I don't understand that either," Jupiter admitted. He looked around and inspected the tunnel walls, while Bob knocked on the stone wall, raising small clouds of dust.

"It's solid. There hasn't been a train through here in a while."

"Can I tell you something?" Pete asked. "I don't like this tunnel. I don't like it one bit."

Jupiter nodded. "This must be a walled side tunnel. Apparently we didn't notice in the dark that we turned off the main tunnel. This one is also much narrower and lower. I suggest we go back."

"Fine," Pete said. "But now I'll take the lamp, so that's clear!"

Slowly, they went back, following their footprints in the dust. Pete conscientiously lit the ground.

"I wonder if there are any more side tunnels like this," Bob said. "I always thought the railway tunnels were just to get through the mountains as fast as possible."

"I thought so too," Jupiter said. "I'm beginning to find this mountain really remarkable. It might be worthwhile to check it out—" He broke off.

At the same time, the boys stopped. They had heard something—a faint scratching and scraping behind them. They turned around. The sound died and then became audible again. It sounded like someone scratching with an object on stone... but there was no one there. The hairs on the back of their necks stood up.

"What is that?" whispered Pete.

"That came from the wall," whispered Jupiter. "Hold the lamp higher, Pete."

In the light of the lamp, the wall looked as untouched as before. But something was moving on the ground in front of it. A thin mist seemed to rise from the ground and quickly condensed. The scratching became more intense. Then they heard a voice—a soft, gasping moan, as if someone was in terrible pain.

"Aaaaaahhhhhhhhh..." The moaning subsided.

"Th... there... is somebody... behind the wall!" croaked Pete.

"But nobody has been here for years!" whispered Bob.

"Aaaaaahhhhhhhhhhh..."

It was a different voice—and it sounded as if it came straight out of the rock next to them. The Three Investigators turned together and backed away. But then Jupiter took heart. "Please give me the lamp, Pete."

Pete clasped the handle of the lamp. "What for?"

"I want to take another look at the wall. Maybe someone behind it is in need of help!"

Reluctantly Pete gave him the lamp. Jupiter lit the wall. In the flickering light, the rising mist formed ghostly shapes around him.

"Get away from there, Juve!" hissed Pete.

"Just a moment," Jupiter said. "I think there's a stone loose."

He returned the lamp to Pete and pushed against some stones. Suddenly the stones gave way and rumbled backwards into the darkness. Dust was spinning and mixing with the fog. Before the eyes of the three boys, there was a big hole in the wall.

“Interesting.” Jupiter held the lamp closer. “It seems there’s a hollow space behind the wall. For me, the passage is a bit too narrow, but Bob, you could—”

“Oh, no,” Bob said most emphatically. “Forget it. Don’t even think about it. I won’t—”

“Don’t be so unprofessional.” Jupiter bent over and peeked through the hole. “I’d climb in myself, if I didn’t—” He broke off.

“What?” whispered Pete. “What was that?”

Slowly Jupiter stepped back from the hole. “There... is something,” he said in a husky voice. “It looked at me... with huge black eyes.”

For a moment, there was complete silence. Then there was a scratching, scraping sound again—as if something was sliding along the wall towards the hole.

“It’s coming out!” cried Pete. “Get out of here!”

Horried, they turned around and ran off. But already on the second step a stabbing pain shot through Pete’s injured knee. He gritted his teeth and continued walking with a limp. Bob and Jupiter ran past him, and their shadows twitched grotesquely distorted over the walls of the tunnel.

Pete looked over his shoulder, stumbled and lost his balance. He grabbed wildly at the wall to restrain himself—but he still had the oil lamp in his hand, which banged against the rock and broke. The fire was brightly lit when all the oil began to burn.

With an outcry, Pete hurled the lamp away from him. It crashed onto the tracks. Pete turned around and ran after Bob and Jupiter—then the fire went out and the darkness enveloped him. He stopped panting—was there not a scratching and scraping noise? The monster was coming after him!

“Jupe!” he shouted, and the echo went eerily through the tunnel. “—Jupe—Jupe—Jupe...”

“Pete!” yelled Jupiter back. “Where are you?”

“—You—you—you...” came the echo.

“Where’s the lamp?” Jupe shouted.

“—Lamp—lamp—lamp...”

The echo distorted Pete’s voice so much that he preferred to shout nothing more and just groped along the rock face as fast as he could. He couldn’t hear anything behind him now—but his heartbeat drowned out any sound the monster could still make anyway.

“Pete?” yelled Bob.

“—Pete—Pete—Pete...”

They couldn’t have gone far. “I am here!” Pete yelled back. “Wait for me!”

“—Me—me—me...”

There was no answer and suddenly, he had the feeling of being all alone in that scary tunnel.

“Jupe! Bob!” he shouted again, and the echo mocked him, running in front of him and returning, and then he heard Bob calling again—but it sounded as if Bob was a little way behind him.

Irritated, he stopped, and suddenly he broke out in a cold sweat. Was he walking back again—straight towards the monster? He turned around, took a few steps back, stopped.

“Take it easy, Pete,” he muttered, not to arouse the echo. “All is well. Just keep walking...”

“Pete!” cried Jupiter and Bob at the same time—and again it sounded as if they were behind him.

Again he turned around, and now he had completely lost his orientation. He groped about twenty steps forward—and hit his foot against an obstacle that gave way slightly. Pete froze. The monster! Whatever had come out of the hole in the wall was now crouching right in front of him, ready to pounce!

“Pete?” cried Bob, but again there was no answer except the echo. “This is crazy. Why doesn’t he answer?”

“Maybe he tripped and hit his head,” Jupiter said. “Too bad the lamp went out! Now we could have walked past him in the dark without realizing it!”

“Maybe whatever it was that got him,” Bob said anxiously. “Are you sure you saw eyes?”

“Yes—huge and black. The light was reflected in them... but I saw nothing else. No face or anything. It was all black.”

“Maybe it was just an old lamp.” Bob didn’t believe it himself.

“No.” Jupiter cleared his throat. “It was alive, and it moved.”

“But we still have to find Pete. Come on!”

They groped through the darkness, listened and finally called out once more.

“Pete?”

Pete did not answer. Carefully they walked on. And suddenly they heard a faint sniffing sound very close to them... and the clicking of clawed paws. Stiff as a stick they stopped. The sniffing repeated and Bob felt warm breath on his hand. He didn’t dare move.

Then a warm tongue licked across his fingers. He cried out and ripped the hand away. “A wolf!”

His words drowned in a loud barking that echoed from the arched walls.

“That is not a wolf!” Jupiter cried to drown out the barking. “It’s a dog!”

Immediately afterwards, flashlights shone in the distance and voices became loud.

“Jupiter Jones, Pete Crenshaw, Bob Andrews? Are you there?”

“Here!” cried Bob. “Here we are!”

A few minutes later, they were surrounded by a group of men who had lamps with them. The dog, a huge brown Mastiff, had stopped barking and was wagging his tail excitedly around the group.

“Thank goodness,” said one of the men, and the boys recognized the voice of Sam Reilly, the stoker. “It wasn’t until we got to Harrowville that we realized you were off the train! Are you all right? Where’s the third boy?”

“Here I am.” Pete limped from darkness into light. His pants were torn at his knee, his hands were scuffed, but he was grinning.

“Where have you been?” cried Bob. “What happened?”

Pete made a grimace. “I managed to get lost on a perfectly straight section of the tunnel. I walked back the whole way without realizing that you had turned into the main tunnel. And then I bumped into the doll again. So I got the idea to walk straight on the rails until I found the turn-off... and then I heard the dog.”

“What doll?” Sam asked with a frown.

Jupiter looked at him in surprise. So the train driver had not told his stoker what they had run over!

Pete started: “The doll that we—” But the First Investigator gave him a poke in the ribs, and he broke it off.

“A strange pile of stones that we had found,” Jupiter said quickly. “Afterwards we got off the main tunnel and suddenly found ourselves in front of a wall... then our lamp went out—”

“Broken,” Pete said, “and it was pretty scary.”

“I can imagine,” said a little man with nickel-plated glasses. “The Chinese tunnel is not to be trifled with.”

“Chinese tunnel?” Jupiter asked with interest. “Why is it called that?”

“We can talk about that later!” Sam intervened. “Right now, let’s just get out of this tunnel.”

“Do we have to walk far?” Bob asked hesitantly. “Because my legs are now made of rubber.”

Sam grinned. “Don’t worry, kid. You’ll ride into Harrowville like a king.”

6. Dr Lee

'Like a king' was perhaps a little exaggerated, but The Three Investigators would not have been willing to exchange the vehicle with which they rolled into Harrowville station for Worthington's Rolls-Royce. It was a trolley, a small rail vehicle with an electric motor that was used for maintenance work on the rails. The huge Mastiff, whose name was Jasper, had made himself comfortable next to Pete and let him stroke him.

A few people had gathered in front of the station. Fred Jenkins stood on the platform with a bandage around his head and waved like crazy. The trolley stopped, Jasper jumped down and barked loudly, and the boys climbed out slowly.

Sam Reilly handed the dog leash over to a tall, broad-shouldered man waiting next to Fred, then nodded to the three boys and walked away.

The tall man stepped towards the boys. "I am William Kingsley," he said in a thoughtful tone of voice. "Which of you is Jupiter Jones?"

"I am, sir," Jupiter said, somewhat surprised. He had imagined the director of a museum differently.

Mr Kingsley wore old jeans and a checked lumberjack shirt with traces of machine oil. He was in his mid-forties, and his hair was more grey than blond. He had a large scar across his forehead. His eyes looked tired and resigned, and there were deep wrinkles around his mouth.

Jasper leaned against him, and he stroked the dog's head. "Titus has informed me that you are representing him. I am glad that nothing worse has happened to you. I live over there in the white house next to the station. My wife is waiting for you. Your backpacks are already there. You can shower and change." He took one look at Pete. "And I'll ask Dr Lee to take a look at your knee. Are you too tired to eat?"

"Not at all!" Jupiter replied immediately, and Pete and Bob grinned. "And I also have a whole series of questions for you, Mr Kingsley. First of all—"

"First, go into the house," Mr Kingsley calmly specified. "There is time for everything else. Come, Jasper." He turned and walked away. Jasper trotted along beside him.

"Come on!" said Fred. "Geez, that was quite a thrill! First the stupid banner, then the broken headlight, and then we arrived here and realized that you are not on the train! Carl almost tore my head off, but I hadn't noticed anything anyway, because I was still hurting then. I'm fine now, but actually I should be lying in bed—even though I don't want to. Did you see or hear anything strange?"

"There's something peculiar," Jupiter said. "And we have a few questions about that."

"A few questions is good!" cried Pete. "I have so many questions that I don't know which to ask first!"

"It's all right with me," said Fred. "Maybe you'll even find out what's going on here."

The house of the Kingsley family must have been a hundred years old. The paint was peeling from the shutters, the plaster was crumbling from the outside walls, and when the boys entered the lobby, the floorboards creaked under their feet.

A slender, dark-haired woman came up to The Three Investigators and smiled at them. "Hello," she said. "There you are. Have you had enough exploring the tunnel?"

Bob returned the smile. "Enough."

"I can imagine. I'm Sarah Kingsley. Sue!" she called, facing the stairs. "Sue, the boys from the salvage yard are here!"

After this call, there was silence. Everyone waited. And when they stood still, Mrs Kingsley sighed. "Very well. Fred, could you show them to their room, please? Dinner will be in an hour."

"Sure, Mrs Kingsley."

She went into the kitchen, and Fred led Jupiter, Pete and Bob up a narrow wooden staircase and into a cosy room with three beds. Their backpacks were on the floor next to the beds. There was a closet, a chest by the window and a table with three chairs. On the table was a bowl of fruits. On the walls hung prints of old steam locomotives, but for the moment, The Three Investigators had more than enough of everything that ran on rails.

They fell on the chairs.

"Now talk!" Fred urged. "Have you seen the ghost?"

"No," Jupiter replied briefly.

"Yes, I did." Pete gave Jupiter a challenging look. "Jupe saw one as well."

"I doubt it was a ghost," Jupe said. "At least it wasn't a physical manifestation of a dead man, as I would have expected."

Fred opened his eyes. "It wasn't a physical what?"

"A ghost," Bob translated.

"Then what was it?"

"We will find out," Jupiter said confidently. "Since when is the tunnel haunted, Fred?"

"Since about—let me see... about eight months ago."

"And everything was quiet before?"

Fred nodded.

"Did anything special happen eight months ago with the tunnel or the train?"

"Not that I know of."

"And has anyone ever tried to get to the bottom of this and maybe take down the wall?"

"A couple of men from town went in once, but got out real quick. They didn't seem to care, and most people don't believe in a spook anyway. Apart from the museum train, no other train runs through Black Mountain, and when the museum is eventually closed, the train service won't operate anymore. Then the whole tunnel will be walled up."

"Hmm..." said Jupiter. "At this moment, the train goes through the tunnel instead of taking the long detour through Owens Peak every time."

"After all, that's what the shortcut through the mountain was built for, so we could always drive in a circle instead of having to manoeuvre or reverse for hours in Sterling. We left for Owens Peak in the morning, filled up with water and coal at the turn-off, drove on to Sterling and then straight home through Kern Valley and up the mountain."

"I see. And what was that you were saying earlier about a broken headlight?"

"Carl said a stone hit the headlight and the glass was shattered so he had to stop."

"That's it?"

"Sure. What more could he have said? He was fixing the headlight while Sam was attending to me." Fred rubbed that bruise on his neck. "I gotta go. I'll see you at dinner."

When Fred had left, Bob said: "I find that strange. Apparently Carl didn't tell everybody that he ran over that wax model. Instead, he makes up a tale about a broken headlight. I thought he said that the police would take care of it."

"Well, fellas, so far, I'm in the dark on this one," Jupe said. "We'll ask him about it sometime."

“Don’t even think about it,” Pete said. “I’ve had enough of this for today. Anyway, I’m going to take a shower and have a look at my knee. I feel like it’s twice as thick as usual.” He limped into the bathroom.

After showering, they had half an hour to get their clothes out of the backpacks and put them in the closet.

“What case are we actually working on?” Bob asked. “Are we trying to find the guy who locked Fred in the bathroom, are we investigating the broken doll, or are we searching for the railway ghost?”

“Everything,” Jupiter said. “Because I believe that all these things are somehow connected. And we also have a suspect, namely our mysterious last passenger, whom I briefly saw when I got in—slim build, black suit, straight black hair, sunglasses. It’s about time we found out who he is and why Fred thinks a Chinese man—”

There was a knock at the door, and he interrupted himself. “Come in!”

The door opened and an elderly man entered. He was slim and slenderly built, wearing an old-fashioned black suit and had combed his thin black hair backwards. In his hand was a large black doctor’s case. And he was unmistakably Chinese.

“Good afternoon,” he said quietly and politely in precise English.

“I am Dr Philip Lee. I’m here to take a look at the injured knee of young Pete Crenshaw.”

With open mouths, the three stared at him. Pete first found his voice again and said hastily: “I am Pete. But the knee is already quite okay. I just tripped, that’s all.”

Dr Lee mustered him in silence. Finally he said just as quietly: “I can see that you are an athletic young man. You know how easily a knee injury can lead to permanent damage, so it’s better that I take a look at your wound now.”

Pete opened his mouth, then he thought about it and closed it again. He rolled up his trouser leg and Dr Lee examined the bruised knee, which had turned blue and green under a bloody crust.

“You fell with all your weight on that knee. You couldn’t support yourself and you landed on sharp stones. I’m going to put a bandage on you, and you should not exercise for the next few days.”

“Oh, it doesn’t hurt any more,” Pete said and suppressed a cry as the doctor palpated the kneecap.

Dr Lee carefully cleaned the wound, smeared an ointment on Pete’s knee and bandaged it. Then he closed his case and stood up.

Jupiter had watched him silently. Now he quickly asked: “I think I have seen you before, Dr Lee. Weren’t you on the train today?”

Dr Lee looked at him without noticeable surprise. “No. I can’t stand taking the train. I go around by car.”

“Oh, then it must have been a mistake,” Jupiter said. “Excuse me, sir.” He waited until Dr Lee turned to leave.

“Can I ask you something else? Why is the side tunnel called the Chinese Tunnel?”

The doctor turned around. This question did not seem to surprise him either. “On 5th September 1904, there was an explosion there, and the tunnel collapsed just as a train was going through. Twenty Chinese railway workers employed in the tunnel died, as did the train crew and the only passenger—the son of the town founder Reginald Harrow. When Harrow learned of his son’s death, he suffered a stroke and died a few days later. Originally the tunnel was called ‘Harrow’s End’, but in the 1950s the name ‘Chinese Tunnel’ became popular.” He turned to the door. “Do not go down that tunnel again, young detectives. It is dangerous there.”

With that, Dr Lee went out and closed the door gently behind him.

7. Dinner for Eight

Bob jumped up and stood by the window. After a few seconds, he said: "He's going away... to the station. Jupe! Is that him?"

"Possible," said Jupiter. "I only saw the man on the train for a moment and he was wearing sunglasses. But we can't rule out the possibility that it was Dr Lee, even if he denies it."

At that moment, the sound of a gong echoed through the house.

"I guess that's the call to dinner," Bob said. "Come on, fellas. Let's take a little break."

They went downstairs, and found their way to a cosy dining room with a large table for nine people. Jasper, the brown Mastiff, lay on a colourful carpet in front of the fireplace. He raised his head, then got up on his long legs and greeted The Three Investigators wagging his tail. They stroked him and sat down at the table.

"Nine people," Jupiter said. "Three Kingsleys, us, and who else?"

"How about that!" said a girl's voice behind them. "Can't the master detectives guess?"

They turned around. The girl was at the door. She was about the same age as the three boys, wearing a wide plaid man's shirt and old jeans. Her brown hair was straight and shoulder-length, and she had a nice face, but seemed distant.

"Hello," Bob greeted her. "You're Sue Kingsley, right?"

"Susan Kingsley." She snapped her fingers, and Jasper trotted right up to her. Without another word, she turned around and walked out. Jasper followed her.

"And welcome to Harrowville, dear detectives, nice of you to help us out of a jam," Bob intoned. "Gee whiz! I'm beginning to feel unwelcome!"

"Oh, don't worry about it," Jupiter said. "With Fred, we get along fine now."

"Yes, but do all the people here have to be knocked down and locked in the toilet before they get friendly? We haven't done anything to them."

"I've had enough too," Pete said. "I vote we forget our case, visit the museum and go back home."

"Out of the question," Jupiter said. "There's something strange going on here and we're going to find out what it is!"

At that moment, Mr Kingsley came in with a bowl of potatoes and put them on the table. "Are you all right? This wasn't the arrival you had in mind, was it?"

"At least it wasn't boring, sir," Jupiter replied.

"Oh, you don't have to call me 'sir'. How's your knee, Pete?"

"Quite well, sir—uh... Mr Kingsley, thank you. It doesn't hurt any more." Pete was surprised to find out that it was true. He was able to move his knee again almost effortlessly.

"Dr Lee seems a good doctor," Jupiter remarked harmlessly.

"Oh, yes, he is. The best around here."

"Have you known him for long?"

"Ten years, I suppose." The museum director stepped to the window and looked out, then turned back. "And how is your uncle, Jupiter?"

"He's fine, thank you. He was very sorry, however, that he could not come here himself because of the injured foot."

"Yes, he told me on the phone," said Mr Kingsley. "But he'll be handsomely rewarded. I hope he's saved a good seat for my old treasures."

That sounded quite cheerful, but Jupiter remembered the bitter and sad letter The Three Investigators had read only a few hours ago on the train, and hesitated to answer. "Yes, Mr Kingsley. But he will give you a fair price for it."

"I know." He smiled. "Titus is all right. I remember when—"

"Dad!" With a scowl on her face, Susan showed up at the hallway door. "You act like you don't care about any of this!"

"It's not that, Sue, and you know it," Mr Kingsley said calmly. "But there comes a point when we shouldn't look back. We'll start again somewhere else."

"All that means is that we're running away in a cowardly fashion!" cried Susan angrily. "We let this criminal win just like that!"

"Don't talk about Mr Campbell in that tone," Mr Kingsley still said very calmly, but tense. "He bought the mortgages, and I can't pay them. That is a simple fact and not a crime. Get over it."

Susan angrily bit her lips, but said nothing more.

The Three Investigators had listened in dismay.

"Mr Kingsley," Jupiter now said cautiously, "perhaps we can help you. Fred has probably already told you that we are detectives. Here is our card—we are happy to investigate for you. If you would give us information—"

"No, Jupiter," said Mr Kingsley. He gave Jupiter back the card and smiled tiredly. "I know you mean well, but there's nothing to investigate in my case. And I don't think you can solve all our problems by tomorrow night—although I don't doubt that you are very capable. Titus told me of your activities, but believe me, there's nothing you can do here."

Stubbornly, Jupiter pushed his chin forward. "Then at least tell us about the accidents in your museum. And with the ghostly haunting in the tunnel... and—"

"We should eat first," Mr Kingsley said kindly and just as unyieldingly, and almost at the same time Mrs Kingsley, Fred Jenkins and Fred's uncle Sam Reilly came in.

"Where's Carl?" asked Mr Kingsley. The Three Investigators listened.

"He's not coming," Sam replied. "He wanted to fix something on the *Sequoia*... and he looked upset. He said the incident in the tunnel upset his stomach and he wouldn't eat."

"He's been upset for a while," said Mr Kingsley with concern. "I'll talk to him tomorrow."

Sarah Kingsley removed the ninth place setting and called everyone to the table. There was beef steak, potatoes, salad and peas, and for dessert, a hot cherry casserole.

For quite a while, everyone was devoted to the food, and Mr Kingsley, Sam, Fred and Susan discussed a technical problem on one of the locomotives named *Apache*. It wasn't until Jupiter poured custard over his third helping of cherry casserole that Bob pushed him under the table. Jupiter blushed and pushed the plate away.

"Why don't you finish your dessert," Mrs Kingsley said amusedly. "You've already been through a lot today."

"I'm on a diet," Jupiter said embarrassed. Bob and Pete snorted and he gave them an angry look and pushed the plate even further away.

"I'd like to know what actually happened," Sam said.

"Why didn't you go back in like Carl told you to? A tunnel's no place to go for a walk, let alone this one."

"We are investigators after all," replied Jupiter with the greatest possible dignity. "When a crime is committed, it is generally advantageous to examine the crime scene and look for

clues.”

He thought quickly and decided not to mention the wax model incident until he had spoken to Carl. “During our investigation, we found the shreds of a banner and collected them until we suddenly realized that the train was moving without us. Pete ran after the train, but could not reach it. Therefore we decided to follow the tunnel. By mistake, we left the main tunnel and—” He paused in confusion.

Mr and Mrs Kingsley and Sam stared at him, Fred grinned broadly, and Sue had to control herself clearly not to giggle.

“Geez,” Sam said. “Do you always talk like this?”

“I try to express myself precisely,” Jupiter said gracefully. He then told about the walk through the Chinese tunnel, about the wall, the eerie noises and the fog, but he didn’t say a word about the hole in the wall and the eerie eyes behind it.

Everyone listened attentively, but it did not escape the attention of The Three Investigators that the others exchanged glances frequently, as if they were communicating without a word about something that was only known to them. Such things had always annoyed Jupiter, and as soon as he had finished his story, he started to ask questions.

“We now have some questions, the answers to which would facilitate our investigation. Who could have a motive to knock Fred down and lock him up? What does the Chinese character on the banner mean? At least Mr Sheehan and probably Mr Reilly—”

“Who?” Sam said. “Please call me Sam, or I’ll have to turn around and see who you mean by ‘Mr Reilly’.”

“Okay, so Sam seems to be familiar with it... What role do the Chinese play in the town? Why was the railway museum sabotaged and ruined? More precisely, what is actually going on here in Harrowville?”

8. The Heirs of the Railway

After that, there was a general silence for the time being. Mr and Mrs Kingsley looked stunned. Sam leaned back with a blank expression on his face. Sue stared at Jupiter. Fred, on the other hand, grinned blatantly.

“You see?” Fred said to Sam. “They really are detectives! Just like I told you!”

Sam frowned and made a defensive movement with his hand but said nothing.

“Very well,” Mr Kingsley said slowly. “I don’t think this is for you, but it can’t hurt to tell you...”

“What’s going on here in Harrowville is very simple to say. Frank Campbell is buying up all the land around the station. And he’s not afraid to get dirty, but we can’t prove anything against him because he’s not sneaking around setting fires, threatening people or anything. When the people concerned are worn down by constant struggle and fear, he offers them a price for their business. And since the price is usually not even bad, many people go for it. Once they have sold, the threats stop abruptly. Some people who have been put out of business by Campbell even work for him afterwards because he pays well and takes good care of his employees.”

“So a very special kind of protection racket,” Jupiter concluded.

Mr Kingsley nodded. “In this way, he has taken control of most of the businesses around the station. By Tuesday, he’ll have my museum.”

“And starting Wednesday, you’ll be working for him,” Susan said so scornfully that The Three Investigators flinched.

“Sue!” said Mrs Kingsley sharply. “You don’t talk to your father that way!”

“It’s true! The guy bought the whole town!” Sue continued.

Mr Kingsley didn’t look angry. He looked at his daughter and said calmly: “Sue, we’ll talk about it later.”

Angrily Sue pushed the chair back, got up and walked out.

As if nothing had happened at all, Mr Kingsley continued: “If Campbell has the museum, he will level the whole area around the station and build a huge entertainment centre. After all, Harrowville is practically dead since they stopped transporting copper. If you look around the town, you’ll find plenty of empty houses and shops.

“There is hardly any work—unless you work for Campbell or for the Chinese over at Chow Valley Road. The young people are all migrating. I tried to attract tourists with the museum, and if Campbell had supported me, it could have worked out. Instead, he sent his thugs after me and terrorized my family.”

He reached for his glass and had a sip of beer, then he put it down. “Sue has a point,” he continued more calmly. “Campbell has offered to let me continue running the museum—but with him as the owner. It would have its advantages. I know for a fact that all our problems would stop immediately. We could stay here, and we wouldn’t have to move. Most of all, I wouldn’t have to give up my museum.” With sudden vehemence, he added: “But I’ll be damned if I’ll take a cent from him!”

“Right you are,” Sam said. “Fred and I talked it over. If you’re leaving Harrowville, we’re leaving too. We’re not working for Campbell as well.”

Fred nodded with a sinister face. Jupiter, Pete and Bob had listened in silence to the unpleasant story.

“On the train, there was a man named Collins,” Jupiter said. “He was travelling with his wife, Mr Campbell, and a third man, but they all didn’t seem to like each other very much.”

“Collins!” said Mr Kingsley. “Then he must have given up... He’s the local glazier, his shop is on Mount Whitney Road. It’s also right here by the train station. I was hoping he’d hang on a little longer. But his wife is sick, and in the last week they smashed up half his shop. I guess that’s what broke him up.”

“What a mess!” cried Bob. “What are the police doing to stop this Campbell?”

“The police are eagerly searching for the criminal thugs who are terrorizing people,” Mrs Kingsley said sarcastically. “Every three days, they arrest one, keep him overnight and release him the next morning, either for lack of evidence or because bail has been posted. The Copper Baron takes care of his people.”

“Why is he called the Copper Baron?” Pete asked. “‘Arch Rogue’ would fit much better.”

Mr Kingsley smiled a little. “His family has held the title for a long time. The Campbells have been the richest people in Harrowville for a hundred years. But the first Copper Baron was Reginald Harrow, who founded the town and gave it his name. Harrow was fabulously rich. He had made a fortune building the Transcontinental Railroad—with several million dollars. He came here with that, and of course, every stone here belonged to him. He got even richer by mining copper.

“But when he died, all the money was gone. The family impoverished and died out, and the Campbells took over... along with the title.”

“And we can hardly hope that this family too will become impoverished and die out,” Mrs Kingsley said grimly. “After all, they own most of the town now—at least the part that’s still alive.”

“But they don’t own Chow Valley Road,” Fred said. “And they won’t get it either! The Chinese hate the Campbells, everybody knows that!”

“Fred, the Chinese hate everybody,” Sam said. “If they just hate Campbell, why are they hurting us with their ghost stories and banners? Because of them, the visitors have stayed away!”

Mr Kingsley shook his head. “We don’t have any proof of that. Dr Lee said his people had nothing to do with the banners.”

“Dr Lee is Chinese too,” Sam said abruptly. “You may trust him... but I don’t!”

“Stop it, Sam! Dr Lee is a good friend. He’s helped us time and again. I don’t want to hear a bad word about him!”

“Does he know what the characters on the banner mean?” Jupiter quickly asked in between.

Mr Kingsley hesitated. “Dr Lee would not speak of a haunting, but it’s always the same character that appears. According to him, it has several meanings, like many Chinese characters. The character itself means ‘die’, but when combined with other characters, it could be part of a phrase that means ‘stop’ or ‘dead end’.”

Pete and Bob turned pale. Jupiter pinched his lower lip.

“This could be connected to the twenty Chinese railway workers who died there.”

“This is a bad chapter in the history of the town,” said Mr Kingsley. “Originally, the Chinese were needed to build the Transcontinental Railroad, after which they were expected to leave the country... but they stayed on. When Harrow founded his town and built a railway line, many of these workers followed him here. They lived in appalling conditions, worked away like slaves and were miserably paid.

“Then came the tunnel disaster. The Chinese wanted to put up a shrine for their dead, as the bodies could not be recovered. The town refused and the Chinese were not respected then. They were even blamed for the explosion in the tunnel.

“The Campbell family, who profited most from the death of the Harrows, did everything to turn the people of the town against the Chinese, hence the mutual hostility that has persisted to this day. And Dr Lee’s association with the barbaric big-noses is something that many of his people resent. I remember—”

“The boys don’t really want to know all this, William,” his wife interrupted him, and Mr Kingsley returned abruptly from the past and smiled embarrassed.

“I’m sorry,” he said. “The history of the railway is my hobby. I can never get enough of it.”

Jupiter, Pete and Bob had listened with fascination. Of course they knew that a railway line had been built across the continent in the 19th century—after all, the rise of Los Angeles to a city of millions had begun after that. But now they suddenly had the feeling of sitting in a place of living history.

“Thank you,” said Jupiter. “But to get back to the banner—does it usually say more?”

“Sometimes,” Sam said, since Mr Kingsley was apparently mentally stuck in the 19th century and wasn’t answering. “A few times they had English words in it: ‘Harrow’s Dead End’, or ‘A Past With No Future’. Especially stupid was ‘Rise and Shrine’.”

He shrugged his shoulders. “It’s not dangerous in itself—but it’s not a great feeling to drive through it and not know what’s going on.”

The Three Investigators exchanged a look. “And what was written on it today?” Jupiter asked.

“I didn’t see that. I was just about to put some coal on the fire when Carl suddenly said: ‘Damn! There’s another one of those banners!’ We went through it and something flew off to one side and Carl braked like crazy.” He suddenly frowned. “But the headlight wasn’t broken.”

“And you didn’t see what flew off to the side?” Bob asked curiously.

Sam shook his head. “No. I asked Carl, but he said he didn’t know.”

“Uh-huh,” Jupiter said. “But something else is still unclear to me. Who would have a reason to knock down Fred on the train and lock him up?”

“Nobody,” Sam said. “But if I catch him, I’ll punch his lights out.”

The Three Investigators looked at the stocky man and believed him at his word. Jupiter looked at Fred. “Has he perhaps stolen something from you? Keys, money, your signal trowel?”

Fred shook his head. “I have no money, and everything else was still there.”

“Hmm...” Jupe continued. “Did you see anything that struck you as unusual before? In the dining carriage or outside the window?”

Fred pondered and shook his head again. “There was something grey somewhere, but I can’t remember where or what it was. Everything else was the same. I just wanted to get the vanilla ice cream from the fridge.”

“Oh, no!” Sam gave Fred a good look. “I thought Carl told you not to open the fridge on this trip? What were you doing with that ice cream?”

“That wasn’t for me! It was for Jupiter, Pete and Bob! That’s my job!”

Jupiter thought it appropriate to change the subject and cleared his throat. “Mr Kingsley? Actually, I’d really like to go and see the museum now. After all, that’s what we came here for.”

“Anything you say,” said Mr Kingsley. “But I have some unfinished business. Fred can show you the museum.”

Fred nodded eagerly, shrugged painfully the next moment and groped for the bandage around his head.

“Fred had better go home and get into bed as Dr Lee said,” Sam said.

“Oh, it’s boring in bed!” cried Fred. “I would rather go back to the museum. And I want to see some detective work.”

“In reality you just want to wipe your fingerprints off the *Apache*’s hand wheel, because you have no business there at all,” Sam said dryly, and Fred grinned broadly again.

9. The Museum

The gate was three metres high, and a thick steel chain with padlock secured it against unauthorized visitors. Surrounding the museum was a nearly three metre high wire mesh fence with three rows of barbed wire at the top.

Fred pulled his bunch of keys out of his pocket, opened the lock and pushed the gate wide open so that The Three Investigators could enjoy the view.

“Great, huh?” he said enthusiastically.

“Um,” Pete began.

“Nice,” Bob said lamely.

In front of them lay a desolate area overgrown with shaggy grass, in the middle of which stood an old engine shed which was now used as the museum’s main exhibition hall. Several rusty rail tracks ran towards it and ended at a turntable. A large pile of bent, rusty brown rails piled up on the side of the engine shed.

There was nothing else to see. Loud blows came out from inside the engine shed, as if someone was hammering metal.

Jasper appeared and barked, but Fred locked the gate again and just marched off. Jasper must have realized that The Three Investigators posed no danger to his territory and trotted along beside them.

“Well secured,” said Jupiter. “I suppose you don’t want any visitors?”

“Very funny,” Fred remarked. “The museum is already closed, and unauthorized persons are not allowed to walk among the exhibits. It’s far too dangerous. Besides, Jasper and that fence will keep out people like Campbell’s goons. Otherwise, there wouldn’t be anything left for your uncle to buy for his salvage yard.”

Jupiter looked around the desolate area. He was a little uneasy. Uncle Titus relied on him, and so did Mr Kingsley—but what he saw so far made him fear that his uncle had cleared the large space at the salvage yard for nothing. Not even Uncle Titus could sell bent, rusty rails.

Fred didn’t seem to have such concerns and led them to the engine shed, whose huge gates were open. Here it actually looked better. The floor had been swept clean. Apparently, the museum was still well maintained, even though it was closed.

The main exhibition hall of the old shed was built like a railway station from 1900, where one could walk around and come up close to the exhibits. Old-fashioned dressed wax models sat on the wooden benches or stood on the platform with their suitcases and bags. Some held newspapers in their hands, others stared at the ancient, yellowed time-table.

On the rails in the middle of the shed stood the *Sequoia* with its coal-car. From there also came the hammering and rumbling that the boys had heard. Carl Sheehan, the engine driver, went around the locomotive and hit the metal parts with a hammer. He nodded at The Three Investigators briefly, but did not pay any further attention to them.

The remaining exhibits of the museum stood on a further rail track. There were three more old steam locomotives. The largest of them, a huge black monster with fourteen wheels, had been cut open at the sides so that the boys could see the pipes in the boiler.

The second one, on the other hand, seemed tiny—it had only six wheels, was barely half as long as the big locomotive, and had a steam dome and a chimney made of polished copper,

so it looked more like a toy. Next to the third locomotive, which consisted almost entirely of a grey steel boiler with a high chimney and a driver's platform, lay a pile of black metal pieces like the last parts of a kit.

Jasper trotted to the free space between the locomotives and sat down right in the middle to keep everything in view.

"Gee," Pete said reverently. "That's great!"

"You're not supposed to sell that kind of stuff," Bob said. "And now I know what these boilers remind me of—Easy Three!"

"Easy Three?" Fred asked confusedly. "What's that?"

"Easy Three was one of our old secret entrances to Headquarters—that's our detective agency's office in Rocky Beach," Jupiter said.

"You have an office?" Fred marvelled. "And what cases have you solved? Mr Kingsley says you're really famous over there on the coast. I heard that you've been featured in the newspapers too. What is the most exciting case you have solved?"

"We'll tell you all about it later, okay?" Jupe said. "Since we are here, we should check out the museum. Why is that engine back there half cut?"

As a true fan, Fred enthusiastically responded. "That is the *General Custer*," he proudly declared. "When we had school classes here, we showed them how such a steam locomotive works, how the steam drives the cylinders and the movement is transmitted to the wheels and so on. The engine in the middle is the *Apache*, but it doesn't run anymore because the smoke chamber leaks. The wreck over there is *Number 56*—it was built in 1856 and is the oldest preserved steam engine around here.

"And the *Sequoia* was built in 1902 and from 1940 on, it stood forgotten for decades in a shed in Trona. Carl and Sam restored it for the museum ten years ago. The coal-car is the original but somehow, it is much too small for the amount of coal it needs. We just have to refill it more often. Anyway, it's a lot of fun to ride in. Shall I show you around?"

"Absolutely!" Bob cried, and Pete nodded. Jupiter hesitated and then nodded as well.

With great enthusiasm, Fred explained to The Three Investigators the function of strange tools and equipment and threw words like 'boiler feed valve', 'cotton pin hook', 'brake tag' and 'fire box' around until their heads were buzzing. In an adjacent documents room, he showed them a collection of the original newspapers from 1904 and a wooden cart full of ancient books.

"Each of the wax model passengers on the platform has a genuine ticket from 1904, and all the clothing and documents were from that time. It took Mr Kingsley years to put all this together!"

Jupiter sat down on an antique wooden bench while Pete and Bob rummaged through newspapers and books.

Fred glanced at him, thought and suddenly asked uncertainly: "Do you think your uncle could do anything with all this stuff?"

Jupiter nodded. "Absolutely... but Bob is actually right. A collection like this shouldn't be sold or torn apart."

"But that's all we have left," Fred said.

"Couldn't you shift the whole museum somewhere else?" Bob asked. "Or sell the entire collection to the San Francisco Railway Museum?"

"They don't have much money of their own... and Mr Kingsley is just fed up," Fred said. "Mrs Kingsley's had enough, and Sue... well, you've seen her. No matter what she says, it's all poison, because she's so angry that her father's giving up."

“Aha,” said Jupiter. “Listen... when I described the stranger on the train to you, you asked if he was Chinese. Now it’s time to explain to us. Do you suspect anything?”

“Not so directly.” Fred ran his hand through his hair. “I thought it might be Dr Lee but...”

“Dr Lee!” cried Pete. “He seemed strange to us too!”

“But Dr Lee would never knock me down!” cried Fred. “He wouldn’t even get angry if some idiots on their mopeds ran him over!”

“Has something like this ever happened before?” Jupiter asked.

“Many times... and he just gets up, wipes the dust off his suit and walks away like he doesn’t care.”

“He didn’t seem violent to me either,” Bob said. “Does he take the train often?”

“Not really. He has a little car that he drives around the mountains. All this action on the train doesn’t suit him at all.”

“Then why do you suspect him?” Jupiter asked.

“Because of the Chinese characters on the banners,” Fred said. “And because he is the keeper of the shrine.”

Bob raised his eyebrows. “So they built a shrine to the Chinese railway workers after all?”

“Yes, but much later. Dr Lee’s family is taking care of it. In fact, they were the ones who built the shrine. It’s on the mountain near the old tunnel. The Chinese tunnel was the original main tunnel, but after the accident, the collapsed part was walled up. Then the new tunnel was driven through the mountain.

“But lately the spook started. These are the dead who were in the tunnel and were never recovered. You heard them.”

“Yes, we heard strange noises,” Jupiter said. “That does not mean that they were the... uh... dead.”

“You can’t know that,” said Fred. “In Ireland and China, for example, there are ghosts everywhere, and everybody believes in them. Why should it be different here?”

“I’m not concerned about Ireland or China right now.” Jupiter sat down on one of the old wooden benches and let his eyes wander over the wax models.

“Whenever we have encountered supernatural phenomena in our previous investigations, they have always turned out to be man-made,” Jupiter explained. “So we can assume that the haunting phenomena in the tunnel—moaning, scratching, fog and so on—are created by someone who obviously doesn’t want anyone else but him to use the tunnel.

“It could be Dr Lee, who is pointing to the dead with the banners and maybe he just doesn’t want their rest be disturbed... or it could be Mr Campbell sabotaging the museum railway to force Mr Kingsley to give up. But I honestly don’t think so. Mr Campbell seems to me to prefer the brutal method—blackmail, threats, gangs of thugs. Haunting is not his style. And besides, he’s already achieved his goal with Mr Kingsley.”

“But Mr Collins accused him of being behind this!” Bob said.

“Crazy!” said Fred. “Campbell has nothing to do with this. He doesn’t care about the tunnel, he just wants to tear down the museum and build his entertainment centre.”

“I think so too,” Jupiter agreed. “It seems to me that someone with more imagination is responsible for what is happening in the tunnel.” Involuntarily, he recalled Carl’s horrified face as he looked up from the broken wax model in the tunnel. “... With quite an evil imagination, though.”

He got up casually and wandered among the wax models. Very quickly, he had found out where one was missing. In front of the platform, there was a large open space, a small part of

which was brighter than the rest, as if something had been standing here for a very long time. He clearly recognized the imprint of two shoes and a suitcase or bag. It must have been the figure of Mr Harrow. There were no other prints.

“Don’t knock anything over,” Fred shouted to Jupe. “Mr Kingsley will kill me if—” He stopped suddenly.

Apparently Fred noticed the same thing. “Hey! There’s one figure missing!” he yelled, “Carl! Carl! Come here. Look at this. Mr Harrow is gone! Somebody stole him!”

10. Goodbye Harrow

The hammering and rumbling on the *Sequoia* stopped. Jupiter, Pete and Bob watched intently as Carl walked around the locomotive and approached the platform, wiping his oil-stained hands with a greasy rag. He took a quick look at the empty spot and then a second look at The Three Investigators. His face was hard and tense.

“What are you talking about?” he said. “It wasn’t stolen.”

“But he’s gone!” yelled Fred. “Can’t you see he’s gone!”

“Yes, he’s gone! Now stop yelling around here.”

“But where could he be?” Wildly, Fred looked around the platform as if he expected the wax model to hide somewhere behind a column or the magazine stand.

“It broke,” said Carl, but he didn’t look at Fred, but at The Three Investigators. “I hit it, and it fell over and broke into a thousand pieces. And since the museum will be gone in three days, I don’t think it’s necessary to repair it. I will, of course, compensate Mr Kingsley for the damage.”

“But of all people, the wax model of Mr Harrow!” complained Fred. “Nobody would miss old Mr Smith or Mrs Floyd, but Harrow!”

“I told you I’d pay for the damage,” Carl said. Then he abruptly turned around and stomped back to the *Sequoia*.

Fred looked at him angrily. “Sometimes I could punch him—if I was big enough! He doesn’t care about anything not directly related to the *Sequoia*! It’s not about the money, it’s about the character and the history behind it!”

“What’s so special about the Harrow doll?” Bob asked harmlessly. “I mean, we know that he was the founder of Harrowville, and that his son died in the tunnel. But otherwise—”

“The doll carries a secret!” cried Fred. “At one time, Mr Harrow was the richest man on the West Coast, and when he died, there wasn’t a penny left. All those millions, gone! Later, his family either died or moved away. Subsequently, there was a man in the Chinese community who made the wax models and then he passed on the art to his son, who then continued making more of them.

“Eventually, Mr Kingsley bought all the dolls. The man from whom he bought them from told him to take good care of the dolls, because the fortune of Harrowville is connected with them. Of course, they were examined closely many times because everyone thought there was a clue to the missing money. We even had real detectives here.” He faltered. “I mean—”

“Never mind,” Jupiter said. “Go on.”

“The Harrow doll in particular, had been examined and X-rayed and poked over and over again. There could have been a key to a safe deposit box in there, or something like that... but there was nothing—not even a mysterious note or clue or something. It was just a wax model with clothes on.”

“How did the Harrow doll look like?” Pete asked.

“Well, he held his gold watch in his hand and looked at it angrily. It was as if he was annoyed because the train wasn’t on time... Wait a minute, Carl!” he shouted so suddenly that The Three Investigators and probably Carl, too, flinched. “What about the watch? Is it broken too?”

There was a long pause. Then Carl came out again. He held something shiny in his hand and threw it over to the boys at a distance of five metres. Pete grabbed it from the air.

"Be happy with it," Carl said and went back to the locomotive.

The four boys crowded around Pete and looked at the object in his hand. It was an old pocket watch, very big and clunky. The hands were at ten-thirty. Of course, it was not working.

"It's not real gold," Fred said needlessly. "Brass, I believe. It would have been too dumb to leave a gold watch lying around a public museum."

"Can you open it?" Bob asked.

"It's been done a thousand times before. I'm telling you, it's all been checked. There aren't even real components in there. The case is actually empty, and there was no note hidden in there either."

"Hmm..." said Jupiter. "Can we borrow this until tomorrow? We'll give them back to you before we leave again."

Fred hesitated. "All right," he finally said reluctantly. "But don't forget."

"Sure," Pete said, putting the watch in his pocket. "Boy, am I whacked. What time is it, anyway? I mean now, today, here, in our own century?"

"Almost eight," Bob said.

"What?" yelled Fred. "I have to go home! Sam's gonna kill me! Carl will let you out, yeah? I'll see you tomorrow."

And with that, he ran out of the hall. Jasper turned and stared at him. But apparently, he was used to such sudden departures, for he only uttered a deep, almost-human sigh and lowered his heavy head back onto his paws.

"Carl, Mr Kingsley, Sam," Pete enumerated. "Is there anyone who doesn't want to kill Fred for some reason?"

"He's more restless than a box of wasps shaken badly," Bob said, enjoying the silence in the dim old hall.

"He'll be all right." That was Carl's voice from the *Sequoia*. Suddenly he had appeared again and was now standing in front of the massive black outline of the locomotive. "He brings a little life to the place... and he's attached to the locomotive and all that old stuff. He's a little too..." He seemed to be searching for the right word.

"... Young?" Bob helped out. "How old is he? Fourteen?"

"Fifteen," Carl said. "But that's not what I meant."

The Three Investigators jumped off the platform and went to Carl.

"Fred is... well, maybe he's old-fashioned compared to other boys his age," Carl continued. "No horror videos, no computer butchery, no role-playing, no cigarettes in the school yard. Such a thing is not his world. Today, every boy wants to be a pop star or a racing driver, but Fred dreams of driving steam engines—like Sam and I did when we were kids. And in that dream, there's nothing bad for him. We try to keep him in it for as long as we could."

"I understand," said Jupiter. "That's why you didn't say anything about the run-over doll and made up the story about the broken headlight... but you wanted to go to the police."

"I just said that then, but what good would that do?" Carl said bitterly. "In three days, it will all be over here. The railway will be shut down, the tunnel will be walled up for good. Then the haunting, the banners and all the other things will be over."

"And no one tries to find out what it's all about?" Jupiter asked incredulously. "I cannot imagine that... What did it say on the banner today?"

Carl wiped his hands on the cloth and did not look at The Three Investigators in the process. "Today, besides a few Chinese characters, it was 'Goodbye Harrow'. Along with the wax model, it was an evil reference to the ruin of our town, nothing more." His mouth closed with a humourless smile. "Of course there'll be one last ride—tomorrow night when we take you home. If there's a banner, it probably says 'Welcome Campbell' or something."

"Then you think all this is coming from Mr Campbell?" Jupiter asked.

"No, that's not what I mean!" said Carl sharply. "And you should be careful with such suspicions. Mr Campbell is a very successful businessman who wants to take Harrowville to the future. The whole dusty past will be swept away, and maybe that's better for the town if it is to have a future. It's just our bad luck to be attached to the past," he said. "Anyway, you should stay out of this and go now. I still have work to do."

Jupiter didn't move from the spot. "I would like to know what you did with the uniform jacket the Harrow doll wore. I think it did not belong to it. Do you know where it came from?"

"No. It was just a rag that was torn to shreds, and I burned it. Close the gate behind you when you leave, I'll lock up later."

It was clear that The Three Investigators would not get anything more out of him, so they went outside.

It was getting dark quickly now. The sun was setting over the black ridge of the mountain. There was a faint smell of smoke in the air that now blew coldly up from the desert in the east. Jupiter set out to find the source of the smell without saying anything. Pete and Bob remained silently by his side.

Thirty metres from the engine shed, they found an old metal oil barrel from which the thin thread of smoke rose. Jupiter picked up an iron rod from the ground and poked around in the ashes. He came across disintegrated pieces of cloth, black discoloured brass buttons and a small square metal plate. He held his breath and bent down into the barrel. When he came back up, he coughed and wiped the metal plate on his trousers. A name was engraved on it in a pretty squiggly font.

It said: 'Carl Sheehan'.

11. Fred the Innocent

Once back in their room, Pete swung his shoes off his feet and let himself fall onto the bed.

"I don't think we've ever been told not to interfere as often as in this case," Pete said. "This sucks."

"We've heard it before." Jupiter got his backpack, dug out all the detective gear, put it on the table, then sat down in front of it. "But usually people yell at us. It's different here—they've already given up."

"No wonder," said Bob, sitting on the window sill. "They only have three days left. And we're leaving tomorrow night. There's not much we can do now."

"On the other hand, things are actually getting better." Pete put his hands behind his head and looked up at the ceiling. "The tunnel will be walled up, the spook will stop, nothing will creep on the tracks anymore, and Mr Campbell will build a cool entertainment centre that attracts people and brings money into town. Well, it's bad luck for the museum, of course, but—to be honest, I've seen ghost towns where there were more going on than here. What are you doing there, Jupe?"

"I realize that our equipment is not much of use in this case," Jupiter said. "And listen how you very skilfully play *advocatus diaboli*."

"Play what?" Pete exclaimed. "Whatever that is I'm not!"

"Jupe is saying that you are playing devil's advocate," Bob explained.

"I'm not!" Pete insisted. "But you have to admit there is something to this."

"Exactly," Jupe said. "The devil's arguments usually have some merit. That's what makes them so diabolical. Campbell's entertainment centre would certainly bring a lot of money and jobs to the town. I'm sure Mr Kingsley and his family, Carl, Sam, Fred and their relatives would be happy to stay elsewhere. And Fred can always be a pop star if he can't get to run a steam engine."

"What?" Pete started to snort, but then he stopped and frowned. "But we're leaving tomorrow night. What can we find out in the few hours after breakfast?"

"We certainly have all night," said Jupiter. "Let's think about it. Fred has just given us the first real clues. Until then, we had several suspects, but no motive, and no real crime—if you don't want to call Campbell's tactics and threats a crime. No one is forced to go into the tunnel and expose themselves to the spook."

"But now our mystery man has made a mistake... maybe even two. Firstly, he threw the very doll that is supposed to be the key to the town's fortune in front of the train, thereby drawing our attention to it. Secondly, he knocked Fred down when he was taking the ice cream out of the fridge. As a result, our original case has expanded considerably, because we now know that the spook in the tunnel is only one half of the puzzle. The other half is the museum... And I think Carl knows exactly what's going on in that tunnel."

"Why?" asked Pete.

"Because he was very angry that Fred had gone along this time. He forbade him to go near the fridge... and later, someone knocked Fred down when he did go."

"But Carl couldn't have left the locomotive while it was running and knocked Fred down," Bob said. "It's not possible. And I don't think he would do something like that."

“Neither do I. But suppose Carl knew someone was hiding in the kitchen—someone who didn’t want to be seen... and somebody who had no idea that Fred was going along this time and wanted to do his job of serving ice cream to the passengers properly.”

“The mysterious last passenger!” cried Pete. “Dr Lee! So he and Carl are accomplices! But for what?”

“I don’t know,” Jupiter admitted. “I’m very unsure about Dr Lee. And I hate to suspect Carl, but he was clearly lying when he said he didn’t know whose uniform jacket it was. It was his own. Now remember what he looked like when he was standing next to the doll... like his own ghost. He was scared to death—not because he’d just run over something that looked like a person at first glance, but because he’d just run over something that was supposed to represent him!”

Bob pulled his knees up to his chin. “But then he’s a victim, not a perpetrator.”

“In any case, he knows something... and he’s not happy about it,” Jupe continued. “We have to find out what the secret of the wax models is, why the Harrow doll with Carl’s jacket was thrown in front of the train, why Carl won’t talk about it and why Fred was put out of action in the dining carriage.”

“Maybe the perpetrator didn’t want Fred to light the lamps for the tunnel passage in time,” Bob said.

“Good thinking, Bob,” Jupe said. “But what for?”

“So Carl and Sam couldn’t see the banner in time,” Bob suggested.

“Then he would have shot the headlight sooner,” Jupe said. “And no matter what Carl told the others, we saw that the headlight was fine.”

“And in any case, Carl would have just driven through the banner,” Pete added. “He only braked because he thought he’d run someone over.”

“You know what I find interesting?” Jupiter said. “Everywhere we stumble upon the name ‘Harrow’—Reginald Harrow, the founder of the town, and his son, who died in the tunnel; the family whose money was suddenly all gone; and then someone made a Harrow wax model and claimed that the fortune of the whole town is connected with it.” He thought about it for a while and then he stood up. “We have a lot of work to do tonight. I suggest we get going right away.”

“What? Where?” Pete asked. “What are we doing?”

“Investigate.”

Pete and Bob had learned that Jupiter could not be opposed at such a moment, nor could he be questioned, that is, they could try if they wanted to waste endless effort and energy uselessly.

Bob swung his legs off the window sill. “And where are we going?”

“To ‘Fred the Innocent’.”

“In the middle of the night?” Pete asked. “What for?”

“To incite him to commit a break-in.”

‘Fred the innocent’ was quickly found. Mrs Kingsley told The Three Investigators where he lived with his uncle Sam and gave them the address. It was just three blocks from the museum.

When they got there, they saw through the window that Sam Reilly was sitting at the kitchen table. He was tinkering with a piece of machinery. In the room next door, Fred sat with his back to the window in front of a computer screen. Pete looked at the screen and

giggled. “No computer butchery? I’m not laughing. Do you know what he’s playing? *Zombie Orcs*.”

“He can get zombie orcs tonight too,” Jupiter grinned and knocked on the window. Startled, Fred turned and stared at the three snarling orcs outside his window with eyes wide open. Then he realized who they were and quickly opened the window.

“Geez! How did you find me? You didn’t plant a homing device on me, did you?”

“Routine work,” Jupiter said casually. “Listen, Fred, we have to get into the museum.”

“Now?”

“Now. Can we borrow your keys?”

“I’m not letting it out of my hands. I’m coming with you!”

“No way.”

“You won’t get past Jasper without me! What do you want to do at the museum anyway?”

“Investigate a few things.”

“You need me more than ever. After all, I know every bolt and nut in there.”

“What if your uncle misses you?”

“He won’t. He’s busy fixing a valve now,” Fred said. “I’m glad somebody’s finally doing something. Everyone else just keeps telling you to get over with it. What kind of equipment do I need?”

To Pete’s and Bob’s surprise, Jupiter, who otherwise categorically rejected all outside interference, gave in without growling. “A flashlight.”

Fred crawled under his desk, rummaged in a box and resurfaced with a flashlight.

“Now where are the keys?” Jupe asked.

“I’ll get them.” Fred ran out of the room and came back with the keys. “Do we have to wear masks or anything?”

“Huh? We’re not the Avengers. We’re investigators, and now we’re going to go and investigate.”

“At last,” muttered Pete.

Fred climbed out of the window and the four of them made their way to the museum.

12. Night Break-In

Jasper was happy to see them and followed his new friends as they crept to the engine shed. Fred opened the shed door, and they scurried through. The light of the flashlights twitched over the black locomotives and the pale faces of the wax models.

“Poor guys,” Bob said half-loud and amused. “They wait and wait, but the darned train just didn’t come.”

“There must have been a reason that the Chinese doll maker and his son made them,” Jupiter said. “Some clue must be hidden inside. Fred, have all the figures been searched?”

“Yes, of course.”

“Then we’ll look again,” Jupe said.

Bob nodded. “And what should we be looking for? If one of them had a key in his pocket or around his neck, surely someone would have noticed.”

“Then it’s something else,” said Jupiter. “Look for anything that catches your eye.”

“And what are you doing?” Bob asked.

“I’m going to see the engines with Fred.”

But it was difficult to look for something they didn’t know what it was. After an hour of aimlessly rummaging around in jacket pockets, boxes, drawers and old suitcases, all four of them met at the *Sequoia*’s running board and sat down. Jasper, who had been eagerly following them, dropped in front of their feet, yawned and closed his eyes.

“Great guard dog,” Pete said. “I can’t believe we’re here all night and we don’t even know what we’re looking for. What are we gonna do next?”

“We’ll think of something else,” Jupiter said determinedly. “Maybe it’s not the wax models or the locomotives. Maybe it’s the train station.”

“I can tell you’re getting tired,” Bob said. “This museum train station didn’t even exist back then.”

“And neither is the current train station,” said Fred, sliding down to Jasper on the floor and patting him. “It wasn’t built till the 1940s, after the old one burned down.”

“Then perhaps it is the wax model of Mr Harrow after all.” Jupiter tried to recall the details of the doll in the tunnel, but all he remembered was the fixed gaze of the glass eyes. “But we can’t get anything out of it now.”

“The fortune of Harrowville,” grumbled Pete. “Why do people always have to talk in confounded riddles?”

“And how could the Chinese even know that?” Bob asked. “There’s no reason for Mr Harrow to tell them what happened to the money.”

“Maybe it’s not about the money,” Fred said. “Maybe he did spend it all and just didn’t want to tell anyone. His train, for example, must have been insanely expensive. Too bad it got buried in the mountain—I’d have liked to take a look at that engine.”

Jupiter, Pete and Bob stared at Fred. “Just a moment,” Jupiter said. “What did you just say? He had his own train? And it was buried in the mountain?”

“Yes, it was his private train. His son wanted to take it to Sterling. My uncle once said that it was rather mean of the Chinese to depict Harrow as a wax model waiting for a train that his son died in—and to call it ‘the fortune of Harrowville’.”

Jasper suddenly raised his head and stared at the door.

"Somebody's coming!" hissed Jupiter. "Lights out!"

Pete and Bob immediately switched off the flashlights, and Fred reacted with a short delay as well. Jasper jumped up and trotted to the door, which they couldn't see from their position behind the *Sequoia*.

There it became a little brighter—apparently someone shone a flashlight around. The four boys sat completely still. The light wandered through the hall, but they sat in the shadow of the *Sequoia* and did not move.

"Ah—hello, old chap," they recognized it was Carl's voice, which echoed softly in the hall. He probably saw Jasper, but right away, the dog started growling.

"What is it—" Carl started and stopped abruptly. Jasper continued to growl.

Then the four boys heard another voice, the sound of which made their neck hairs stood up. It was a male voice—oily, soft and full of scornful malice.

"Well, well, aren't you glad to see me?" the voice said. "Hold on to the dog."

"Come here, Jasper," Carl commanded. Jasper kept growling. "Come here! Put that thing away. You know it's no use."

"It brings a lot of good, my dear friend." The evil voice laughed softly. "You got the mutt, I got the gun. Who would be faster?"

"I'm holding him back," Carl said. "What are you doing here?"

"Oh, you know exactly what I want. I must have asked you a hundred times."

"And I'm telling you for the hundredth time, I have no idea where the thing is."

"And like the hundred times before, I don't believe you." There was a pause.

The four boys didn't dare breathe.

"Say," the voice then began again, "it seems as if one of your precious wax models over there is missing. Would that be the poor, unfortunate Mr Harrow? What on earth could have happened to him? Is he... broken?"

"Go away, Reno," Carl said in a strained voice. "Your damn prank didn't do you any good either. I don't know where the stuff is, and even a thousand wax models on the rails can't change that! Now, you listen to me. There will be no more trips to Owens Peak. It's too conspicuous, and I've already had to put up with some stupid questions today... And you hurt Fred. I told you what I'd do if anyone gets hurt. So why don't you look wherever you want and best of all, go blow yourself up. Just leave me alone!"

"I understand," said the man named Reno. "A thousand wax models can't change your mind, you say? That's a pity." He paused. "Well, I suggest you think it over again. I know how you feel about this lousy museum and that heap of scrap metal. Surely you don't want Kingsley to suddenly have nothing to sell on Tuesday?"

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, nothing. I'll see you tomorrow. Oh, and hold onto that dog until I get out the gate."

At that moment, Fred made an involuntary movement as if he wanted to jump up and rush out of his hiding place. Pete grabbed him by the shoulder in a flash, but it was already too late.

"What was that?" Reno said sharply. "There is someone here! Why didn't the mutt bark? Give me the flashlight!"

As fast as they could, the four boys crawled under the *Sequoia*. They huddled between the big wheels and barely dared to breathe.

Immediately afterwards, the beam of the flashlight glided over the running board on which they had just been sitting.

"There's nobody here," Carl said unnecessarily loud. "It must have been a rat."

“Then the dog is even more incompetent than I thought. Let him go. I’m dying to know what kind of rats there are to hunt around here.”

“If I let him go, there’s only one rat he’ll hunt.”

Again the bright light shone through the dark hall—and fell through the spokes of the huge wheels onto the faces of the four boys. But Jasper growled again, deep and threatening, not paying attention to Carl, who talked to him softly. And suddenly he broke free and threw himself on Reno.

“No, Jasper!” cried Carl, but it was too late.

One shot rang out, and Jasper cried out. Soon after, the flashlight flew aside in a high arc, and someone ran out of the hall.

13. Jupiter Investigates Alone

The four boys crawled out from under the *Sequoia*, and Fred immediately rushed to Carl and Jasper. "Jasper! Are you okay? Jasper, say something!"

The dog whined, but he stood on his legs and wagged his tail.

"What do you want him to say?" asked Carl snappily. "The guy missed. He's all right. What are you doing here? I thought I told you to stay out of this."

"Yes, sir," said Jupiter. "That was before we found the burnt uniform jacket and realized that the attack in the tunnel was not aimed at the museum, but at you."

"Carl!" Fred blurted out. "Who is that? What does he want from you? What does he want to do to the museum and the trains? He's threatening you, isn't it?" He paused, and The Three Investigators could almost hear it working in his head. And finally he added, doubting and uncertain: "Is it true, Carl?"

Carl did not answer immediately. He stroked Jasper, who gladly put up with it. After a while, Carl shrugged, turned around and walked over to the *Sequoia*, where he sat down on the running board. Jasper, who had followed him, immediately pressed himself against his knees again and was rewarded with another stroke. He made a pleasant humming sound. Unfortunately, he was the only one who felt comfortable.

"The man's name is Devlin Reno," Carl finally said. "He's from San Francisco. That's all I know about him." He was silent again, as if that was all there was to it.

"And what does he want from you?" Fred asked. "He was blackmailing you in cold blood! What's the stuff he's after? Did you ever rob a bank together, and then run off with the loot?"

"Don't talk nonsense!" said Carl sharply. "I told you I hardly know the guy."

"But you know him well enough to let him ride on the museum train," said Jupiter.

Carl winced. "How do you know that?"

"I saw someone get on the train when it left Sterling. Straight black hair, sunglasses, black suit. It was that Devlin Reno guy, right?"

"Yes," Carl reluctantly admitted.

"And I thought it was Dr Lee!" cried Fred. "What a stupid thing to do! Why did that guy hit me? What did I do to him?"

Carl avoided his gaze. "You saw something you weren't supposed to see."

"Something grey, right?" Jupiter asked. "In the fridge or near the fridge."

"Right!" cried Fred. "Now I remember. I took the ice cream out, and there was a strange grey parcel. Looked like a lump of clay or something."

"But it wasn't," Jupiter said and looked at Carl sharply. "It was plastic explosives which you probably bought at Owens Peak and put in the fridge where Reno could conveniently pick it up while you drove."

Pete, Bob and Fred were wide-eyed. "What makes you think so?" Pete asked.

"I've only just understood it," Jupiter said, "when you told Reno to go blow himself up."

"But then the train could have blown up on us!" yelled Fred.

"No," Carl said. "Plastic explosives need a detonator. Without a detonator, it's not dangerous. And the colder it is stored, the less danger it poses."

“So that’s why you were so angry with Fred when you discovered that he was on the train,” Bob said. “It’s part of his job to pass out ice cream and drinks, and he could have seen the explosives—which was what happened. And Reno knocked Fred down, locked him in the toilet, took the explosives—”

“—And calmly got off in the tunnel when the train stopped,” Jupiter said. “But that wasn’t planned, was it?”

“At least not by me,” Carl said grimly.

“Then I was right,” Bob said. “We were not alone in the tunnel! I knew I heard something there.”

“Then I guess it was Reno I saw,” Jupiter frowned. “He must have been hiding behind the wall—maybe there was a passageway we missed. And those huge black eyes—those were his sunglasses! He had the sunglasses on, holding the black suit in front of his mouth and nose and making this horrible moaning sound to frighten us.”

“It worked for me,” Pete said. “Great—a blackmailer and a bomber! Just the sort of person you’d like to hang around with in a haunted tunnel. I would have preferred a monster.”

“Bomber?” Carl repeated. “No, that’s not him. He needs the explosives to clear the buried tunnel.”

“What’s the point?” asked Fred in amazement.

“Gee, Fred!” cried Bob. “That’s obvious! He’s looking for Harrow’s train! He wants to dig it up because he thinks Harrow’s money or some kind of treasure is in it.”

Jupiter and Pete stared at him. Then Jupiter looked at Carl. “Is it true?”

Carl nodded.

“Gee,” Fred said in awe.

“And what does he want from you then?” Jupiter asked.

The train driver drew his face to a humourless grin. “He’s driving on two tracks. He digs in the tunnel but at the same time, he hopes to get to the money in an easier way. I have studied the history of the Harrow family quite thoroughly, and he thinks I know where the stuff is. But I don’t—and I don’t believe in all that nonsense either. Why would Harrow hide his money or treasure on the train or anywhere else? Or his son? It is simply a legend spun from the accident, Mr Harrow’s death, the impoverishment of his family, and the wax models.”

“And you told Reno that?” Bob asked.

“Yes, I did. In return, he set my house on fire. Just by chance it didn’t burn down. He can dig and blast in the tunnel until he blacks out for all I care.” Carl got up. “It’s late. Go to bed, boys. I’ll lock up here.”

“Wait!” cried Jupiter. “How can this guy blackmail you? What does he have on you?”

“Sorry, Jupiter, I won’t tell you.”

“But maybe we can help you!”

“No, Jupiter. You can’t help me and you won’t know. Good night.”

“I can’t believe it!” Jupiter kicked the gate furiously.

“We got to the mystery of the tunnel haunting in one fell swoop and still haven’t made a single step forward!”

“Pardon? I think we’ve figured out quite a lot—and in record time.” Pete yawned heartily. “What more do you want? I, for one, just want to go to bed.”

“Me too,” Bob said and took a look at his watch. “Guys, it’s almost one!”

"I'd love to see the locomotive," Fred said and pushed The Three Investigators out the gate before locking up. "Imagine, an original train from 1904!"

"The locomotive will be nothing more than a crushed wreck," Pete said. "There won't be much left to see, even if it is dug up."

"Fellas!" Jupiter hadn't listened to them at all. "We still have the mystery of the wax models to solve!"

"Why?" asked Bob. "This is about Harrow's treasure, isn't it? And it's either gone or it's on a buried train you can't get to. Mystery solved. We don't need the wax models for that."

"And now, we can go to bed." Pete yawned again.

"No!" cried Jupiter. "We have to talk to Dr Lee!"

"Jupe!" Bob exclaimed. "What else do you want to find out at 1 am? And what do you think Dr Lee will tell you if you ring his doorbell in the middle of the night? Do what you want—but I'm going to sleep! Good night!" And without waiting for an answer, he marched away.

Pete followed him.

"I'm going too," Fred said. "It was exciting, wasn't it? I never thought Carl would get involved with a criminal. I love being a detective. But at this moment, good night, Jupiter!" And he scurried away.

Lonely and abandoned, Jupiter stood in front of the railway museum and pinched his lower lip.

Shortly afterwards, he had looked up an address in the phone booth at the train station and marched through the sleeping town. The streets were deserted, and a cold wind blew up from the desert.

Jupiter shivered and thought with some envy of Pete and Bob, who were now surely lying and sleeping in their warm beds. But he couldn't let go of the case.

They had already found out so much but only had less than 24 hours to complete solving the mystery. So much depended on it—the fortune of an entire town, if you could believe the statement of the Chinese doll maker.

But did the fortune really depend on the missing money? Or was it on something else entirely? Fortunately, it wasn't far to the house he was looking for.

The house stood alone in a small garden, and as an invitation to burglars, several windows were open, one of them was on the ground floor. It was dark in all the rooms.

Jupiter fervently hoped that no one was at home, and entered silently through the window. He stayed in the room just long enough to realize that he would not find anything useful here.

Then he opened the door and sneaked into the hallway on tiptoe and with bated breath. Quickly he looked around. There were three more doors and a staircase. The first door led to the kitchen, the second to a storage room. The third door...

"Jackpot!" whispered Jupiter triumphantly.

He was standing in a study. It was crammed with bookshelves containing hundreds of books and dozens of files. Jupiter searched the shelves quickly and methodically. And soon, he found what he was looking for.

He pulled out a thick file folder, switched on the desk lamp and began to read. And the longer he read, the bigger his eyes became. Unwillingly, he let out a soft whistle and was

immediately startled when, somewhere in the distance, the shrill yap of a coyote sounded. Then suddenly he heard someone inserting a key into the lock at the front door.

Jupiter turned off the light in a flash. The front door opened and was closed again, and then footsteps approached the door to the study. There was no time to put the file back in its place. Jupiter crouched under the desk and held his breath.

The steps stopped just outside the door. Then they became audible again. The person walked past the study and went up the stairs.

Jupiter pushed himself out from under the desk, put the file back on the shelf, climbed through the window and disappeared like a ghost in the night.

14. Visiting Dr Lee

“Jupe! Wake up now! The train is about to leave!”

“What?” Jupiter cried, drove up from a deep sleep and stared around him with wild eyes. “What time is it?”

Bob, who was standing next to Jupiter’s bed in his pyjamas, laughed. “Calm down, Jupe. It’s only nine. You’ve had eight hours of sleep.”

Jupiter sank back into the pillows and waited for his heartbeat to calm down. “Eight hours, don’t make me laugh. I didn’t get to sleep until four!”

“Why is that?” Pete now sat up in bed and rubbed his eyes. “Don’t tell me you went to see Dr Lee in the middle of the night after all.”

“Of course not. I’ve been listening to you snore and thinking.”

“And you solved the secret of the wax models by yourself?” Bob asked. “Great. Now we can have breakfast in peace and quiet, pick out some nice souvenirs from the museum and ride home comfortably to go to school fresh and rested tomorrow morning.”

“Sorry, no can do. I haven’t got much closer to figuring this whole thing out.”

“Perhaps a little closer, I suppose,” Bob drilled on.

“Unimportant,” Jupiter muttered, buried his head in the pillow and closed his eyes.

“Oh, no,” Bob said. “We’ve still got a case to solve... So rise and shine!” And with a big sweep, he tore the blanket off Jupiter.

Half an hour later, Jupiter was sitting at the breakfast table in the dining room, gnawing a sandwich.

“Dear me,” said Mrs Kingsley amusedly as she put a pot of cocoa on the table. “What did you do last night?”

“Nothing,” Pete innocently assured her. “We were just... uh... talking—about the museum and stuff.”

“It’s quite a museum,” Bob carelessly added.

Mrs Kingsley’s smile disappeared. “Then take one last good look around today. Tomorrow everything will be taken apart, and so far there seems to be not much for your uncle, Jupiter.” She suddenly turned and went into the kitchen.

Jupiter started up a little late. “Huh? Yes, it’s great. I like it too...”

“Too late,” Bob said. “She’s already gone in.”

Jupiter blinked. “Oh?”

“Jupe, our thinking machine,” Pete said. “How can you solve a mystery if you’re so tired that you didn’t even notice the honey dripping onto your shirt?”

Jupiter looked down on himself. “Bummer! I’ll be right back.” He got up and trotted out of the room.

A quarter of an hour later, he came back—in a clean T-shirt, with wet hair, wide awake, in top shape and in great shape.

“So, fellas, first of all we’re going to see Dr Lee,” Jupe announced. “I am convinced that he can give us some useful information. And then we’ll talk to Carl again. Are you guys done with breakfast?”

In the phone booth at the station, they took a look at the tattered phone book and found that there were ten Lees on Chow Valley Road, but only one who had the initial 'P'. Jupiter called immediately. The quiet voice with the precise pronunciation answered on the second ring.

"Dr Philip Lee."

"Good morning, Dr Lee," said Jupiter. "This is Jupiter Jones of The Three Investigators. I'm sorry to disturb you on Sunday, but we would like to speak to you. Would you mind if we stopped by your place right now?"

"Good morning, Jupiter Jones. Is this about your friend's injured knee?"

"Not only that," Jupiter said. "We have a few questions about the wax models at the museum."

"Sure, you can come now," Dr Lee said and hung up.

Like the rest of Harrowville, Chow Valley Road had its best days long ago. The road, which ran parallel to the tracks, turned left about three hundred metres behind the train station and ended in a cluster of single-storey row of houses that looked like they had to lean against each other to keep themselves from falling over.

The plaster was crumbling from the walls and the paint on the wooden doors had cracked. Here and there, laundry hung in a miserable front garden. In some gardens, there were small Chinese pagodas. A laughing stone Buddha crouched in front of a laundry. The house next to the laundry was burnt out. A few Chinese children were playing football on the street, but they ran away as soon as The Three Investigators appeared. The three of them were uncomfortable.

Chow Valley was a different world—old, dilapidated, unfriendly and strange. Only the dusty cars on the street and the satellite dishes on some of the houses indicated that they had not stagnated a hundred years ago.

Dr Lee's house was also shabby and run-down. A white metal sign next to the door said 'Dr Lee's Office' in English, and a copper sign with Chinese characters probably said the same. There were no indication of his office hours. Jupiter walked up to the house and rang the bell.

Almost immediately, Dr Lee opened the door for them. He was still in the worn black suit in which they had met him earlier. Thin nickel glasses sat on his nose and made him look like an accountant. He did not smile as he watched the boys.

"Come in," he said quietly and politely.

He led them into a small study full of shelves with medical, technical and other reference books. Also on the floor were piles of books and medical journals in English and Chinese. On a small work table, papers piled up to dangerous heights. Jupiter's aunt Mathilda would probably have had a fit of raving madness after looking at this and then would have ordered a large container.

There were three chairs in front of the table. Dr Lee asked The Three Investigators to sit down with a wave of his hand and then took a seat on the worn office chair behind the table. He leaned back, folded his hands on the table and looked at Jupiter, Pete and Bob in turn.

"I've read up on you," he said. "You've been very successful as detectives in Rocky Beach and other places. Your Inspector Cotta confirms that you have his full support and trust. He wants you to know that, as usual, he has nothing better to do at the moment than to sit by the phone and wait for you to tell him where to pick up the criminals."

He didn't even pull a face, but The Three Investigators grinned widely. They could just imagine Cotta's grumpy voice growling this message through the phone as he laughed inside himself.

"We are also very proud of our cooperation with Inspector Cotta, sir," Jupiter said. "We have often been able to give him valuable information and—"

"—And then he got us out of the trouble we'd got ourselves into," Bob interrupted before a lengthy Jupiter Jones self-congratulation.

Dr Lee nodded seriously. Then he suddenly stood up and left the study. The Three Investigators looked at him in surprise, but barely two minutes later, he was back. In his hands was a pretty lacquered tray with a steaming pot and four dainty cups. "We will have tea," he simply said.

In the multi-ethnic city of Los Angeles and also Rocky Beach, the Chinese were by no means exotic, but out here in the desert, The Three Investigators felt like three American thugs sitting opposite Dr Lee.

In order to cover up his insecurity, Jupiter immediately took his tried and tested method and started talking. Originally, he had really only wanted to ask Dr Lee a few questions, but the doctor listened calmly and attentively, and suddenly Jupiter realized that he was telling an epic account of everything that had happened to them since they left the Sterling train station. He also mentioned that Carl had told them about Devlin Reno trying to get to the buried train. But he didn't tell them about the blackmail and the ugly scene at the museum.

"We are now interested in these strange banners and wax models," he finally said. "Mr Kingsley said you translated the Chinese character for him as 'die', 'stop' or 'dead end'... Who would be interested in putting a banner like that in the tunnel?"

"Perhaps someone who does not want the twenty dead Chinese workers to be forgotten," replied Dr Lee. "Of course that makes me a suspect."

"But you wouldn't have written 'Rise and Shrine' on it."

"That's right."

"I don't know," Bob said, "but I feel like somebody's trying to pin something on the Chinese."

"Some time ago, some books were stolen from me," said Dr Lee apparently incoherently. "They were not of much value, but among them was a Chinese dictionary."

"And you suspect that the thief simply picked out an appropriate character to make the Chinese suspect?" Jupe asked.

"I suspect nothing," Dr Lee replied. "I am not a detective."

"When and how were the books stolen?" Jupe asked.

"It's been several months now. I was called to see a patient. When I came back, my front door was open and the lock was broken. This room here was completely devastated, and when I had finally cleaned up everything, I noticed that the books were missing. The thief had left no fingerprints, and since the books were not valuable, the police didn't bother to search very hard."

"Who was the patient you were called to see?"

"Mr Campbell. I don't think he was very sick, though. When I got there, he was on his feet. He called me names and chased me away."

"Hmm..." Jupiter said. "And what about the wax models? Do you know who made them?"

"They were made by different people," replied Dr Lee. "I could tell you their names, but they will not help you. I suppose you'd like to know what the phrase 'the fortune of Harrowville is connected with them' means."

“Well,” Jupiter said. “Uh... yes. Do you know?”

The doctor smiled a little. “No. Like everyone else, I suspect that these words refer to the missing money. But if I knew where it was, I wouldn’t have stood idly by and watched our town fall into ruin and my friends give way to a greedy money shark. I would also do something for my own compatriots who are not well... but I don’t know.”

“To be able to point to the money, the man who built the wax models had to know where it was,” Bob said.

“That’s right. He was a simple worker who did welding, repairs and the like at the station. He must have seen or heard something that made him want to encode his knowledge. In his spare time, he made masks and jewellery, and around 1912, he created the first wax model, which is that of Mr Harrow.”

“Hmm...” Pete wondered while sipping his tea. “If he knew where the money was, why didn’t he go and get it himself?”

“If Harrow’s son had it with him on the train, then it would have been buried in the accident,” said Dr Lee. “A Chinese worker had neither the money nor the time nor the permission to dig around on his own... and he would have been afraid of the ghosts of the dead. Although Mr Harrow was hated in town for his arrogance and brutality, everyone would have liked his money. However, a Chinese worker would not have got very far with that.”

“How could we understand that?” Pete asked.

“Strictly speaking, the money, if recovered, will still be the property of the Harrow family and descendants—irrespective of how they obtained it. The Chinese would not get much out of it by helping them recover the money. Alternatively, if the Chinese were to secretly get all the money for themselves, that would amount to stealing. We are not talking about a couple of dollars here that you can take and spend it quick.”

“So he made a mystery out of it,” Jupiter surmised. “But one without words and without clues. Did the wax model actually have a duffel bag or something like that?”

“Yes. It was stolen one night and later found slashed and torn up in a front yard. If it ever contained a clue, it’s long lost.”

“Now if the money was on the train and this Reno found it,” Bob wondered, “what would happen then?”

“He’d run off with it, of course,” Pete said.

“What if somebody else found it?” Bob asked.

“If it was paper money, nobody would even want it,” said Dr Lee. “Banknotes from 1904 are nothing but worthless trash today—except probably for collectors. It would have to be real gold, and I suspect that some long-lost heir of the Harrow family would come forward very quickly and claim it. There would be a finder’s fee, of course... and the state would also collect a substantial sum...”

“But this is all just an assumption. I myself do not believe in the treasure in the wreckage of the train or anywhere else.” He poured himself some more tea. “I believe Mr Harrow has spent his money and therefore this Mr Reno can dig all he wants in the tunnel. He may even uncover the train and get a reward from the town... but he won’t find gold... or ‘the fortune of Harrowville’.”

15. An Old Story

At the gate of the museum, Jasper greeted The Three Investigators joyfully and accompanied them to the engine shed, where Carl, Sam and Fred were filling coal into the coal-car of the *Sequoia*.

"Well?" said Sam with a wink. "I understand you're interested in the wax models. How's the investigation going?"

"It is still going on," replied Jupiter, while keeping an eye on Carl. The train driver shovelled coal with a grim face into a bucket that Fred emptied it into the coal-car at the top.

"Do you have to work today too? It's Sunday," Jupe asked.

"What are you thinking?" Sam said. "Today's our last trip with the old lady here when we take you home... Do you know what happens if there's another banner in the tunnel today? I wouldn't care two hoots. Have you packed your bags yet?"

"Not yet," Jupiter said. "We'd like to go through the old documents again, if that's allowed."

"Sure, it's allowed." Mr Kingsley appeared behind them. "You can look at them, if you want. Have you even thought about what Titus is going to have?"

"He dreams of a steam engine." Jupiter took one look at the *Sequoia*, which was polished to a high sheen. "But I find the wax models more interesting."

"Because of the treasure story?" Mr Kingsley wondered. "It's all just a crazy legend. The doll maker made a joke out of it, nothing more."

"I don't think so," Jupiter said. "I believe that he left a concrete clue."

"And I suppose you want to find it?" Sam asked mockingly.

"I have a hunch, but I have to check it out first. So I'd like to look through the old documents."

"Do what you have to," said Mr Kingsley. "But to be honest, I don't think you'll succeed where other people have failed for a hundred years."

"I wouldn't be so sure," Jupiter replied confidently.

While The Three Investigators were walking to the platform, Pete hissed: "Are you crazy, Jupe? We have no idea where the money or treasure is!"

"Yes," Jupiter said softly. "Fred told us... at least I think so, but—"

"Fred?" hissed Bob. "How could Fred, of all people, know—"

"He doesn't even know." Intricately, Jupiter got onto the platform awkwardly. "The unloved Mr Harrow stood here for decades, frowning at his pocket watch, as I do now." He took the pocket watch from his trouser pocket, but did not stare at it. Instead, he swung it around a little on the chain. "The watch stands at ten-thirty. I wonder why."

"I don't know," Pete said.

Bob, who at least took time to think, said: "Because that's when his train was due to arrive, and he was annoyed with the delay."

"Are you sure?" Jupe asked.

"What else could it mean?"

"That's just the question," Jupe said. "On the day of the accident, his private train left Harrowville for Sterling by going through the tunnel, which was when the explosion

happened. It doesn't really make sense to create a character who is angry about a late arrival time when the train in question had already crashed. It would have been more logical to depict Mr Harrow—that is, the character—the next day with a newspaper with the unhappy news in his hand.”

“But that seems a bit contrived to me,” Bob said.

“I know,” Jupe said. “You two go and see what’s in the newspapers the passengers are holding in their hands.”

“All right,” Bob said. “And what should we look out for?”

“The names of people and locomotives.”

For half an hour, nothing could be heard but the rumbling and banging at the *Sequoia*. Jupiter read through old train time-tables and log books from 1904. Pete and Bob leafed through the newspapers. Then they met again at the platform edge.

“So?” Jupiter asked.

“Nothing,” grumbled Pete. “The locomotives had no names at all, just stupid numbers—‘0-6-0’, ‘2-6-2T’ and so on. That doesn’t help us at all.”

“It depends,” Jupiter said. “Fred! Could you come over here, please?”

Fred ran over to them and climbed lightly onto the platform. “What is it?”

“Can you tell us what the numbers of the locomotives mean?”

“Sure. That’s the number of wheels,” Fred explained. “The first and last numbers indicate the leading and trailing wheels respectively, and the middle numbers indicate the driving wheels—those are the ones with the coupling rods on them.

“The *General Custer*, for example, is a ‘4-6-4’, which means it has four leading wheels, six large driving wheels, and then another four trailing wheels behind it. The *Sequoia* is a ‘2-4-2’ and the *Apache* is a ‘0-6-0’, which means it has only six driving wheels as it is so small that it doesn’t need other wheels to support it... And *Number 56* has only four driving wheels.”

“That’s a real secret code!” Bob exclaimed.

Fred smiled. “Not for railway men.”

“Pete, were any of Harrowville’s locomotives in the papers?” Jupe asked.

“Just the ‘2-6-2T’—that’s the one that was buried,” Pete said.

“Aha, so Harrow’s private train was ‘2-6-2T’,” Jupiter remarked.

“T?” Fred said. “That’s a side tank locomotive. It has tanks which are situated on both sides of the boiler.”

“Hmm...” Jupe mumbled and took a quick glance at the train log book he was still holding. “And what did you find out, Bob?”

“Well, I really got something. You’ll be amazed.” Bob picked up a newspaper that he had taken from one of the wax models. “It’s hidden in the birth and death announcements.” He unfolded the paper and pointed to Jupe and Pete:

Announcing the engagement of Mr Stephen Harrow and Miss Letitia O’Malley, San Francisco. Date: 5 September 1904. 2 Sam. 15:28.

“5th September 1904? But that is exactly the date on which the tunnel collapsed!” cried Pete.

“Poor guy,” Fred said. “Imagine dying so horribly on his engagement day! And poor Letitia!”

“She wasn’t on the train, was she?” Pete wondered.

Bob shook his head. "At least she was not mentioned in the reports of the accident."

"What happened to her afterwards?" Pete asked.

"Oh, Carl knows this. He knows all the old family stories. Carl!" yelled Fred across the hall. "Carl, what happened to Letitia O'Malley?"

"Who?" Carl called back from the cab of the *Sequoia*.

"Letitia O'Malley! The fiancée of Stephen Harrow!"

"She later married someone else." Carl disappeared and didn't answer Fred's vociferous question: "Who?"

"Say, what does '2 Sam. 15:28' mean?" Pete asked.

"It's a verse from the Bible," said Jupiter. "Second book of Samuel, chapter 15, verse 28."

"And what does it say?"

"Give me a Bible, and I'll tell you," Jupe said. "Fred, is there a Bible around here?"

"We even have the Harrow family Bible," Fred said proudly. "But it's not just lying around here. Come along."

In the documents room, there were some old books in a glass cabinet. Fred took out a key and opened the display case containing the big old Bible.

Carefully they turned the thin pages.

"Here it is!" cried Bob. He tapped his finger on the line and read it out:

See, I will wait at the fords of the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me.

"That's a funny engagement verse," Pete remarked.

"And next to it is something handwritten. It's hard to decipher." Jupiter leaned close over the book despite the pungent smell. It said:

Sorry, Dad.

Your diabolical pride compels me to do this.

Stephen

"Diabolical pride?" Pete remarked. "What kind of a—"

"You should start packing your bags now. It's about time." They winced and turned around. Carl stood in the doorway of the documents room.

"I suppose you'd like to get rid of us," Jupiter asked.

Carl looked at him. "Yes, I do. I'll take you to Sterling, you go home and forget the whole thing. It's for the best."

"All right," Jupiter said unexpectedly. "We won't interfere anymore... but in return could you tell us what really happened on 5th September 1904! You know, don't you? You said yourself that you've been studying the Harrow family history."

Carl remained silent.

"Come on!" begged Fred. "Tell us! Please!"

Sighing, Carl gave in. "All right... but after that, you leave me alone..."

"It was a pretty bad story. Stephen Harrow wanted to marry Letitia O'Malley but his father objected because the O'Malleys were one of the poorest families in Harrowville. When Stephen insisted on the wedding, Harrow threatened to disinherit him. Stephen then sent Letitia to relatives in San Francisco, where she was to stay until the wedding. He told his father that he had separated from her. Over the next two years, Stephen repeatedly forged his father's signature and obtained about five million dollars in gold.

“He placed the engagement announcement in the newspaper of 5th September 1904. On that day, he boarded the train to Sterling. From there, he wanted to go to San Francisco to marry Letitia there and wait for his father’s reaction... but he didn’t get far. The locomotive exploded in the tunnel, and he was killed. When his father learned that his son was dead and had looted the family fortune earlier, he suffered a stroke and died a few days later.”

“So there is gold after all,” cried Bob. “But—”

A dull bang from afar cut him off. They all turned together, and the next moment, they ran out of the engine shed.

“It came from Black Mountain!” cried Mr Kingsley. “Up there!”

Above the roof of the train station, they could see the mountain through which the railway tunnel passed. A thick black cloud rose above the grey slopes. A muffled rumble lay in the air. People ran out to the street.

“Carl!” cried Mr Kingsley. “Sam! Come on!”

Carl was white in the face. “Reno,” that’s all he said. Then he ran off.

“Wait!” cried Jupiter. “Take us with you!”

But the three men rushed to a white pick-up truck, slammed the doors shut and raced away.

Moments later, a police car with its siren blaring followed them. It was followed by several private cars, almost all of whose occupants were in Sunday church dress.

The Three Investigators and Fred ran to the road, waving and shouting, Jasper barked, but no one stopped. In a big cloud of dust, the cars raced towards Black Mountain.

“I don’t believe it!” yelled Fred angrily. “They can’t just leave us here!”

“We could walk,” Pete suggested and immediately got an incredulous look from Jupiter.

“It’s at least five kilometres to the mountain! How are you going to walk there, Pete? By the time we get there, it will all be over!”

“But we can’t just stand here and wait for people to come back,” cried Bob.

“We’ll take the *Sequoia*!” Fred said with a wild look. “I can drive it! I have watched it done a thousand times. One of you just has to play the stoker.”

“We most certainly will not!” Jupiter said to him. “We’re not driving this massive—” He suddenly broke off, and his eyes began to sparkle.

“I know that look,” Bob said worriedly. “Admit it, Jupe. You’re having one of your completely insane ideas. I’m not ready to steal a helicopter for you!”

“Helicopter? Oh, nonsense.” A grin gradually spread across Jupiter’s round face. “I just thought of the perfect means of transport for us.”

He turned to Fred, who watched him suspiciously. “Quickly, Fred... Can you operate a trolley?”

15. Devlin Reno

A few minutes later, they purred towards the mountain. Fred was in his element, operating the levers, talking non-stop and explaining in detail what a trolley was made of, what it was used for and how it worked.

The Three Investigators did not listen, though. Pete and Bob stared at the grey slopes of the mountain over which the black cloud was rising. Jupiter brooded over the old 1904 train log book, which he had put in his pocket in the general confusion. Jasper sat next to them, panting and letting the wind of travel blow around his muzzle.

"I wonder if Reno accidentally blew himself up," Bob suddenly interrupted Fred's rant.

"I hope so," Fred said vengefully. "Then Carl would be rid of him, just like he said! What a rotten blackmailer! And he nearly shot Jasper!"

Pete shook his head. "I don't think Carl really meant it that seriously. He looked scared to death."

"However, he still supplied Reno with the explosives," Bob said. "Even though it was a single package."

"I had the impression that Carl had already brought a lot of the stuff from Owens Peak. Probably enough for that explosion," Pete said. "What do you think, Jupe? ... Jupe!"

"Huh?" Jupiter looked up. "What did you say?"

"We wonder if Reno blew himself up," Pete said. "Look at that cloud!"

Jupiter looked up. "Strange," he murmured.

"What's strange?" Pete asked.

"The cloud."

"Why?"

Jupiter did not answer. But suddenly he went up as if stung by a tarantula and screamed: "Stop! Stop the trolley!"

Fred jumped out of shock and tore the brake. The trolley came to an abrupt stop and everyone fell into confusion. Jasper barked loudly.

"Why stop?" yelled Fred. "Don't you want to go to the mountain?"

"No, we don't! We have to get back to the museum now! How do you turn this thing around?"

"Jupe!" cried Pete. "What's wrong?"

"The cloud didn't come from a blast in the tunnel!" Jupe exclaimed. "When blasting, the clouds tend to be white or yellow from all the dust that is blown into the air, but this one is black—like from burning car tyres. I'll bet you anything Reno isn't even up there anymore!"

"What? Where else could he be?"

"He's in the museum! Don't you remember what he said to Carl? 'You don't want Kingsley to suddenly have nothing to sell on Tuesday.' The explosion up there on the mountain is just a diversion for what he really wants—to destroy the museum to force Carl to give up! Fred, turn around now!"

"No need," said Fred. He had turned pale. "The trolley goes in both directions. Hold on tight!"

He pushed the lever to the left, and the trolley started moving jerkily. Pete held Jasper tight so he wouldn't fall off. At breakneck speed, the trolley raced back to the houses of the town, which lay dusty and bleached like bones under the blazing sun.

"Can't this go any faster?" cried Jupiter.

"Then we'll fly out of the rails!" Fred yelled back, but pushed the lever to the left as far as it would go. Now the trolley no longer purred—it cracked and rattled over the rails, shaking every bone in the body of The Three Investigators as they held on to the metal frame convulsively.

Suddenly Fred cried out. "We're going too fast!"

It cracked again, the trolley jerked to the left, almost knocking Pete and Jasper overboard, and then it raced straight towards the station and towards the carriages of the museum train that were standing on the track.

Fred pulled the lever to the right. Sparks flew under the wheels of the trolley, the brakes screeched. The trolley slowed down, but it was still approaching the last carriage a bit too fast. The Three Investigators clung together and Fred held on to Jasper as they awaited the impact. The trolley rammed the carriage buffers and stood still. They were stunned by the impact but nobody was hurt.

"Come!" cried Jupiter. They jumped off and ran along the rails towards the museum, from where a pervasive smell of petrol blew at them. Jasper ran ahead of them, barking loudly.

And then they saw him—a man dressed in black, tipping a liquid from a canister onto the floor outside the gates of the engine shed. He heard Jasper barking and turned around. Then he hurled the canister to the side and suddenly took out a gun.

"Jasper!" Fred yelled, made a leap forward and barely got hold of the dog by the collar.

Shivering, The Three Investigators came to a halt, and Pete helped Fred to calm Jasper down, who was almost choking himself to get to Reno.

"You should be there at the tunnel with the others," said Reno in his wicked, oily voice. "Too bad!"

Now that they saw Reno properly for the first time, he had no resemblance to Dr Lee at all. His face was long and hollow-cheeked, his eyebrows were two thick straight bristles, and his hair was not neatly combed back, just thin and greasy.

"The game's over, Reno," Jupiter said in a firm voice. "We overheard you last night in the museum. We know what you're up to. It won't work—Carl Sheehan really doesn't know where the gold is."

"So, you were the rats that roamed around and didn't even dare to squeak? You're talking big now, fat boy. I fire one shot, and this whole place goes up in flames. Too bad for you, too bad for Carl, too bad for that Kingsley."

"I wouldn't do that if I were you," Jupiter said.

"Oh no? And why not?"

"Because then you'll never get your hands on the gold."

"You sound pretty sure of yourself," scoffed Devlin Reno. "You think you know exactly where it is, huh?"

"Yes," said Jupiter. "It's inside the museum."

Bob, Pete and Fred gasped for breath and stared at him in amazement.

Reno just let out a laugh. "It's not there, fat boy!"

"Yes," Jupiter said. "Five million dollars."

"Oh, yeah?" Reno thought about it for a minute. "Fine. How about you show me where it is. Come here! The rest of you, stay here and hold that mutt down!"

“Leave the boys alone, Reno!”

Everyone, including Reno, flinched and turned around. The man who spoke was standing at the gate. He was wearing a brown suit and looked as angry as he did the day before, when The Three Investigators had disturbed him in his business meeting on the train. It was Mr Campbell, the Copper Baron.

“It’s one thing to look for gold,” he said sharply. “And I have nothing against the destruction of the museum either... but what you are doing here is going too far. Put that gun away!”

Reno didn’t move. “Go away, Campbell. This is none of your business... or do you want me to spill the beans on who paid me to start fires and break-ins around here? I’ll drag you in—you, Sheehan, everybody!”

“Do what you have to do,” Campbell said, “but let the boys and the dog go.”

“No way, not when I’m this close!” He pointed the gun at Jupiter. “So you claim to know where the gold is? You’re coming with me now!”

Everybody stood there paralyzed. Only Jasper fought furiously against Pete and Fred to get free. And they couldn’t fight the power of the giant dog. All of a sudden, he broke free and went after Reno with a terrible growl.

The man startled and pulled up his gun.

A shot rang out.

“Jasper!” yelled Fred.

The next moment, Reno was lying on the floor and Jasper was standing over him with bared teeth—uninjured. Jupiter backed away and looked around.

From the other side of the engine shed, three people emerged—Susan, Mrs Kingsley and Dr Lee. Mrs Kingsley was holding a gun that was still smoking slightly.

“There,” she said, a little breathlessly. “I hope I only hit the gun, mister. But I do not mind too much if it was your hand. I called my husband. He, Carl and Sam are on their way back and they’re bringing the police right now.”

17. The Fortune of Harrowville

A short time later, the railway museum grounds were swarming with people. The police had arrested Devlin Reno and also taken Mr Campbell in for questioning. The rescue team carried the petrol-soaked wax models outside and placed them in the shade of some trees so that the petrol could evaporate without their faces and hands melting in the sun. The old documents were brought outside in wheelbarrows to dry.

Meanwhile, Mr and Mrs Kingsley, Susan, Carl, Sam, Fred, Dr Lee and The Three Investigators gathered next to the *Sequoia*, while Jasper chewed on a steak.

"I was packing dishes for our move when William called," Mrs Kingsley said. "He said all they found at the entrance to the Chinese tunnel was a pile of burning car tyres. The tunnel itself was already quite exposed, but then a minor landslide must have buried some of it again. He said that Carl was suddenly convinced that something was going on at the museum and asked me to check.

"Dr Lee came and said that he saw you all running from the trolley into the museum. When I went outside, I immediately smelled the petrol and saw Mr Campbell walking across the grounds. We sneaked in from the other side while Mr Campbell distracted this Reno. And when he wanted to shoot Jasper, I shot first. And I'm glad there wasn't a spark, or else this whole place would probably be on fire by now."

"It was a very good shot," Jupiter said. "My knees are still shaking now." But he smiled.

"Can I ask what's going on?" Mr Kingsley asked. "Who is this Devlin Reno anyway?"

"He is the man Mr Campbell hired to do his dirty work," Jupiter said. "He revealed this just a while ago. He set all the fires and committed the break-ins to intimidate the people to turn to Campbell. And at the same time, he was looking for Harrow's gold. He dug for it in the tunnel, chased away curious people with eerie spooky noises, and at night, he blasted rocks out of the way. In addition, he put the banners in the tunnel to falsely implicate the Chinese community.

"Reno was particularly desperate to locate the gold in these few days before this place is taken over by Mr Campbell, and the tunnel walled up. But he wasn't really sure that the gold was in Harrow's train. After all, there was no evidence of this, and the wax models in the museum seemed to indicate that it was hidden somewhere else. So he tried to force Carl to tell him where it was."

"Carl?" repeated Mr Kingsley in amazement, and Sam frowned. "How could Carl possibly know that?" They looked up at the train driver, who was leaning against the *Sequoia* with his arms crossed, but he was silent.

"Carl knows more about the Harrow family history than he is comfortable with," Jupiter explained. "And Reno had found that out, hadn't he, Carl?"

Carl still stood there in silence and after a pause, he nodded briefly. "The Harrows were a gang of crooks and criminals. Reginald Harrow had made his fortune not through honest work, but by cheating Chinese railway workers out of their wages, diverting the money of those who had died to his own accounts and falsely accounting for purchases. Furthermore, his own son stole from him under his nose for years. The family has been dead a hundred years, and that's a good thing. There's no room in this town for any more Harrows."

“Quite right,” said Mr Kingsley. “And the day after tomorrow, the railway chapter will be closed... What will you say to your uncle now, Jupiter?”

Jupiter hesitated. Then he took a deep breath. “I will tell him that there’s nothing for him here in Harrowville, Mr Kingsley.”

Everyone stared at Juve. Mr Kingsley looked as if he’d been punched in the face. “Nothing?” he asked in a rough voice. “Is my museum that crummy?”

Jupiter cleared his throat. “No,” he said firmly. “On the contrary. I think it should definitely be preserved. Isn’t it possible to incorporate it into the entertainment centre?”

“I don’t have the money, kid.” Mr Kingsley’s voice was flat now.

“But if you had it—”

“But we don’t have it,” Susan yelled at Juve. “Geez, give it a rest! Can’t you see what you’re doing to my father?”

“Yes, I do... and I’m sorry,” Jupiter said. “I only have one more question, but not to Mr Kingsley.” He turned and looked at Carl. “Carl... if you had the gold, what would you do with it?”

“Why you scamp!” Carl said, but for some reason, he didn’t look angry. He paused and then said: “I would give the Chinese here a decent compensation... and then I’d do what I’ve been doing for the past ten years—I would donate whatever I can to the museum.”

“Five million dollars?” Jupiter asked.

“With five million dollars, you can do a lot of things,” Carl replied. “Maybe we could build a few more railway lines and finally close this cursed tunnel.”

“Jupiter!” said Mrs Kingsley sharply. “What is this? What are you getting at?”

“I just want to tell you a short story,” Jupiter said, “about the unhappy romance between Stephen Harrow and Letitia O’Malley.”

“We already know that story,” Sam said.

“Do you also know the sequel?” Jupiter asked and took a dramatic pause for effect.

“Letitia had not been engaged to Stephen Harrow without consequences,” he continued. “In 1903, she had a baby, to which Stephen confessed in writing. In 1904, they wanted to marry, but it never happened. Stephen met with an accident and died. Letitia was left alone with her child in San Francisco. But in 1908, she did marry another man, and his name was... Roger Sheehan.”

Everyone gasped for breath. They stared first at Jupiter and then at Carl.

Carl remained calm. “I’d like to know how you figured that out, Jupiter Jones.”

Jupiter blushed a little. “I’m sorry to admit that last night, while my friends were asleep, I paid you a... uh... visit.”

“Juve!” cried Pete and Bob in outrage.

“I just had to get to the bottom of this before we leave,” Jupiter defended himself, “and... uh... you two were too tired.”

“That’s not the point!” cried Pete furiously. “We’ve always worked together—” He stopped when he realized that everyone else was staring at him in disbelief. Fred, on the other hand, looked so excited as if he had suddenly discovered a new toy. Even Susan grinned.

“So you’ve been snooping around in my family documents,” said Carl. “For years, I’ve done everything to hide the fact that I’m related to this unpleasant gang. This was what got me blackmailed by that Reno, and now you add on to it by announcing it publicly!”

“Carl!” said Mr Kingsley weakly. “Is this true?”

“Yes,” Carl said grimly. “And I hope Jupiter knows what he’s doing, otherwise I’ll leave him in the tunnel again.”

"I have a reason for doing so," Jupiter said calmly. "Surely I must be certain that everyone knows who owns the gold before I tell you where I think it is."

"Is it in Harrow's train?" Mrs Kingsley asked.

"It is not in Harrow's train and it has never been on it," Jupiter announced.

"You said it was here in the museum," cried Pete. "But it can't be!"

"Allow me to explain..." Jupiter began. "We know that Stephen Harrow stole five million dollars worth of gold from his father. He hid it and presumably had a plan to retrieve it later. When and how, we do not know, and perhaps we will never know. However, where he hid it, at least one other person knew—the Chinese welder—as he was involved in hiding it.

"As Dr Lee explained that, at that time, the Chinese would not benefit from retrieving the gold, so the welder did not attempt to do so. Years later, the welder and his descendants created the wax models, and when Mr Kingsley bought them, he was told that the dolls were the connection to 'the fortune of Harrowville'—implying that they provide clues to the treasure.

"However, the dolls, in particular that of Mr Harrow, had been examined thoroughly and there were no hidden objects or messages. Unfortunately, the Harrow doll is now destroyed, and only the watch remained. Fred described to me that the doll depicted Mr Harrow looking annoyingly at his watch which displayed the time of ten-thirty—and this was precisely the clue. It seemed that he was annoyed with the train's late arrival, so the clue points to the train... but which train is it?"

Jupiter took another dramatic pause for effect and then pulled an ancient train log book out of his pocket.

"On 5th September 1904, two trains left Harrowville. One was Mr Harrow's private train which met with an accident in the tunnel on its way to Sterling. That meant that it never arrived back at Harrowville.

"However, earlier that morning, before the accident, there was another train that left and passed through the tunnel unscathed. It transported copper and goods to Sterling, made the wide loop to Owens Peak and scheduled to arrive back in Harrowville... at 10:30 am!

"According to this train log, this train was pulled by a locomotive with the number '2-4-2', which is still running today, and it is actually in the museum right now..."

He took a step back and revealed a name plate attached to the side of the *Sequoia*. "And here it is... so I didn't lie to Reno."

The silence that followed heralded confusion. Even Pete and Bob stared at Jupiter as if he had lost his mind. Only Dr Lee did not look surprised at all.

"It can't be," Carl finally said. "Sam and I took apart the *Sequoia* before. There's no place where five million dollars in gold could be hidden."

"Not in the locomotive," Jupiter continued. "But it still has the original coal-car, hasn't it? ... And Fred said that it is actually too small for the amount of coal the locomotive needs, so you have to refill the coal more often."

Fred made a choking sound and yelled: "The gap!" And then he pranced up the coal-car like a monkey.

Sam and Carl stared at each other, then looked at Mr Kingsley, who just nodded. They immediately fetched a toolbox and followed Fred to the coal-car.

Jupiter threw Dr Lee a look. The Chinese nodded. "So you figured out how a simple Chinese welder knew of Stephen Harrow's secret."

"Yes," said Jupiter. "And I think you have guessed quite a lot about the Harrow family. Why didn't you say anything?"

"I apologize for that," said Dr Lee. "The Chinese welder and doll maker was my grandfather. He was a proud, smart and educated man but was treated like a slave here in Harrowville. He hated the railway and especially the Harrow family. The wax models he created were not to help the Harrows, but to ridicule them. And for many years, I was convinced that a descendant of the Harrow family lived in this town—but I thought it was Mr Campbell. I certainly did not intend to make him richer by telling him what I thought."

"But with a finder's fee, you could have helped the museum," Jupe said.

"I know." Dr Lee looked at Mr Kingsley. "But I believed that it would be better if the museum was closed and all the old stories were finally forgotten. I'm sorry."

"It's all right, Philip," said Mr Kingsley. "I understand that." But he still looked hurt.

Sam's head popped out of the coal-car. "Give us a hand with this coal."

It took another half hour to unload the coal. After that, they all looked like they worked in a mine.

Then Carl went into the coal-car, and his voice sounded as if coming from a deep shaft. "And I have always wondered what these welds were for!"

There were some crunching sounds, thunderous beatings, metallic screeching—and then silence... until Susan couldn't stand it anymore.

"Just say it," she cried. "Is it there?"

Fred emerged from the coal-car. Through an opening in the engine shed roof, a beam of sunlight fell right on his shaggy head. In his hand, he held a rectangular bar decorated with black fingerprints... but still the bar glistened and sparkled in the light.

18. Harrow's Train

Six weeks later, the *Sequoia* was at the head of the train that arrived at Sterling station. Hordes of tourists and school classes were waiting for it. Jupiter, Pete, Bob, Uncle Titus, and Aunt Mathilda waved wildly, and from the cab, two persons waved back—Fred and Carl.

The engine whistled, the brakes screeched, and the train stopped. Dressed in the uniform of a conductor from the Harrowville Railway Museum Company, Sam climbed out of the carriage, nodded briefly at the 'junk guy' and waved them over to the front carriage before taking care of the other passengers.

They got on board and the train started moving. After a while, Sam entered the carriage. "Tickets, please."

"Here you are," said Uncle Titus gracefully.

Just as gracefully, Sam clipped the tickets. Only then did he smile. "Well, it's good to see you. How's the foot, Titus?"

"All is well again," replied Uncle Titus. "What about you? I'm bursting with curiosity!"

"Yeah, we've made a lot of progress," Sam said. "Devlin Reno is in jail, and Campbell has put up quite a bit of money as compensation for the fires and burglaries. He even had Devlin break into Dr Lee's house—and there was nothing there except a few books. Anyway, the museum turned out pretty nice, and we're laying new tracks for a sightseeing tour."

"And the tunnel?" Bob asked excitedly.

"We shored up the tunnel. It won't collapse now."

"And what about the train?" Pete asked.

Sam grinned. "What train?"

That's all they could get out of him.

In no time, they had covered the distance to Black Mountain. The old train lamps were lit and distributed in the carriages before the train plunged into darkness. Jupiter, Pete and Bob sat at the window of their carriage and looked at the high arched tunnel walls that passed by them.

"Creepy!" said Aunt Mathilda. "I can't bear to think of you really walking along down there without any light!"

At the same moment, the train slowed down and finally stopped. The Three Investigators looked at each other. Then they all remained seated, determined not to leave their seats again until Harrowville.

But suddenly, the carriage door opened and Fred rushed in, smudged with soot and beaming.

"Quick!" he yelled. "Come check this out!" And he was out again.

At least thirty passengers got out. The others rolled down their windows and looked out. Some pointed to a gaping hole in the tunnel wall. It was the turn-off to the Chinese tunnel.

Mr Kingsley appeared and pushed his way through to The Three Investigators. "There you are! Please come with me... I have something to show you."

"A wall?" grinned Pete. "We've seen it before."

Mr Kingsley just laughed.

The whole group set off. After about fifty metres, The Three Investigators noticed that the tunnel had changed. Boulders were piled up to the left and right of the rails, and between them were bricks.

“The wall’s gone!” Jupiter said breathlessly and stared into the darkness in front of them. “But I thought everything here had collapsed!”

“We have uncovered more of the tunnel,” said Dr Lee, who suddenly appeared next to them. “Behind the wall was a small cavity where Reno kept his equipment and held his haunting.”

Mr Kingsley went a few steps ahead and switched on a powerful spotlight that shone further into the tunnel. The babble of voices died down, and everyone focussed on him.

“Now, if you would follow me, I’ve something to show you...” Mr Kingsley said and walked on into the tunnel.

A metal part flashed in the light. After a slight turn to the left, the group saw something huge and black, with huge wheels on wrecked old rails.

There it was—Harrow’s train!

Sure, the boiler had burst; its pipes torn open and twisted; the steam dome and chimney were missing; and the cab had collapsed into a pile of bent steel... but the locomotive returned to the light after a hundred years.

“I’d like to say something,” Mr Kingsley broke the silence. “Without the help of Jupiter Jones, Pete Crenshaw, Bob Andrews and Fred Jenkins, we could not have recovered this old locomotive. The museum would have closed and an important piece of history would have been lost in Harrowville... We would therefore like to thank you.”

He paused because people started clapping. Fred, Sam, Carl, Uncle Titus and Aunt Mathilda were beaming, while The Three Investigators did not quite know where to look.

When calm returned, Mr Kingsley continued: “After careful consideration, we have decided to give you this historical locomotive as a gift.”

A murmur went through the crowd. The Three Investigators kept their mouths open. Uncle Titus beamed on—only Aunt Mathilda suddenly seemed thunderstruck.

“Of course it must be restored,” said Mr Kingsley. “But after that, it shall be yours.”

At last Jupiter found his voice again. “Thank you,” he said. “I think I speak on behalf of my colleagues when I suggest that the locomotive... uh... should not come to Rocky Beach, but remain in the Railway Museum as an exhibit.” He looked up at Pete and Bob, who both nodded their approval.

In the bursting applause, everything that Uncle Titus might have had to say was lost. But, as always, Aunt Mathilda had the last word.

“Thank you, Jupe,” she whispered fervently.